

PERSEPOLIS

THE STORY OF A CHILDHOOD



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INTRODUCTION

In the second millennium B.C., while the Elam nation was developing a civilization alongside Babylon, Indo-European invaders gave their name to the immense Iranian plateau where they settled. The word "Iran" was derived from "Aryana Vaejo," which means "the origin of the Aryans." These people were semi-nomads whose descendants were the Medes and the Persians. The Medes founded the first Iranian nation in the seventh century B.C.; it was later destroyed by Cyrus the Great. He established what became one of the largest empires of the ancient world, the Persian Empire, in the sixth century B.C. Iran was referred to as Persia – its Greek name – until 1935 when Reza Shah, the father of the last Shah of Iran, asked everyone to call the country Iran.

Iran was rich. Because of its wealth and its geographic location, it invited attacks: From Alexander the Great, from its Arab neighbors to the west, from Turkish and Mongolian conquerors, Iran was often subject to foreign domination. Yet the Persian language and culture withstood these invasions. The invaders assimilated into this strong culture, and in some ways they became Iranians themselves.

In the twentieth century, Iran entered a new phase. Reza Shah decided to modernize and westernize the country, but meanwhile a fresh source of wealth was discovered: oil. And with the oil came another invasion. The West, particularly Great Britain, wielded a strong influence on the Iranian economy. During the Second World War, the British, Soviets, and Americans asked Reza Shah to ally himself with them against Germany. But Reza Shah, who sympathized with the Germans, declared Iran a neutral zone. So the Allies invaded and occupied Iran. Reza Shah was sent into exile and was succeeded by his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was known simply as the Shah.

In 1951, Mohammed Mossadeq, then prime minister of Iran, nationalized the oil industry. In retaliation, Great Britain organized an embargo on all exports of oil from Iran. In 1953, the CIA, with the help of British intelligence, organized a coup against him. Mossadeq was overthrown and the Shah, who had earlier escaped from the country, returned to power. The Shah stayed on the throne until 1979, when he fled Iran to escape the Islamic revolution.

Since then, this old and great civilization has been discussed mostly in connection with fundamentalism, fanaticism, and terrorism. As an Iranian who has lived more than half of my life in Iran, I know that this image is far from the truth. This is why writing *Persepolis* was so important to me. I believe that an entire nation should not be judged by the wrongdoings of a few extremists. I also don't want those Iranians who lost their lives in prisons defending freedom, who died in the war against Iraq, who suffered under various repressive regimes, or who were forced to leave their families and flee their homeland to be forgotten.

One can forgive but one should never forget.

Marjane Satrapi

Paris, September 2002

PERSEPOLIS



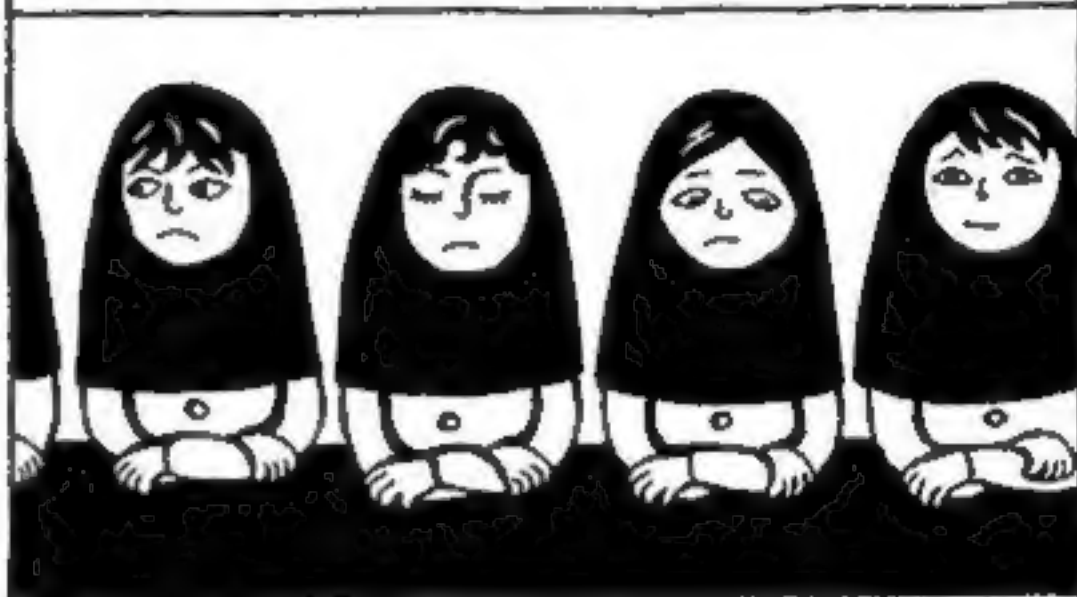


THE VEIL

THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD. THIS WAS IN 1980.



AND THIS IS A CLASS PHOTO. I'M SITTING ON THE FAR LEFT SO YOU DON'T SEE ME. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GOLNAZ, MAHSHID, MARINE, MINNA.



IN 1979 A REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE. IT WAS LATER CALLED "THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION".



THEN CAME 1980: THE YEAR IT BECAME OBLIGATORY TO WEAR THE VEIL AT SCHOOL.



WE DIDN'T REALLY LIKE TO WEAR THE VEIL, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAD TO.



AND ALSO BECAUSE THE YEAR BEFORE, IN 1979,
WE WERE IN A FRENCH NON-RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.



WHERE BOYS AND GIRLS WERE TOGETHER.



AND THEN SUDDENLY IN 1980...

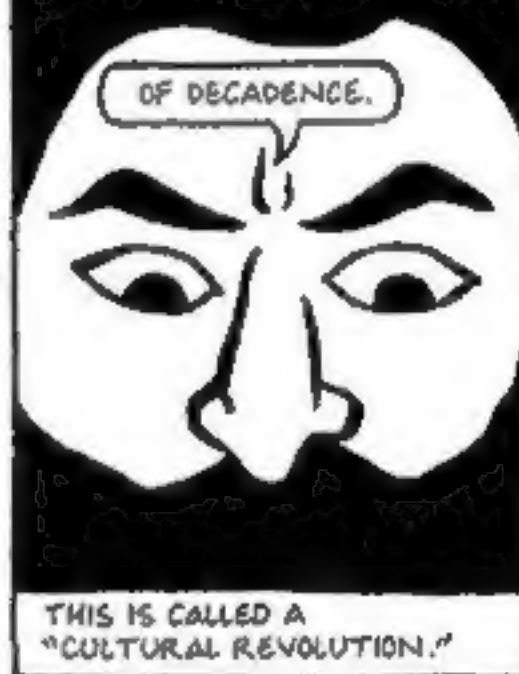
ALL BILINGUAL SCHOOLS
MUST BE CLOSED DOWN.



THEY ARE SYMBOLS
OF CAPITALISM.



OF DECADENCE.



THIS IS CALLED A
"CULTURAL REVOLUTION."

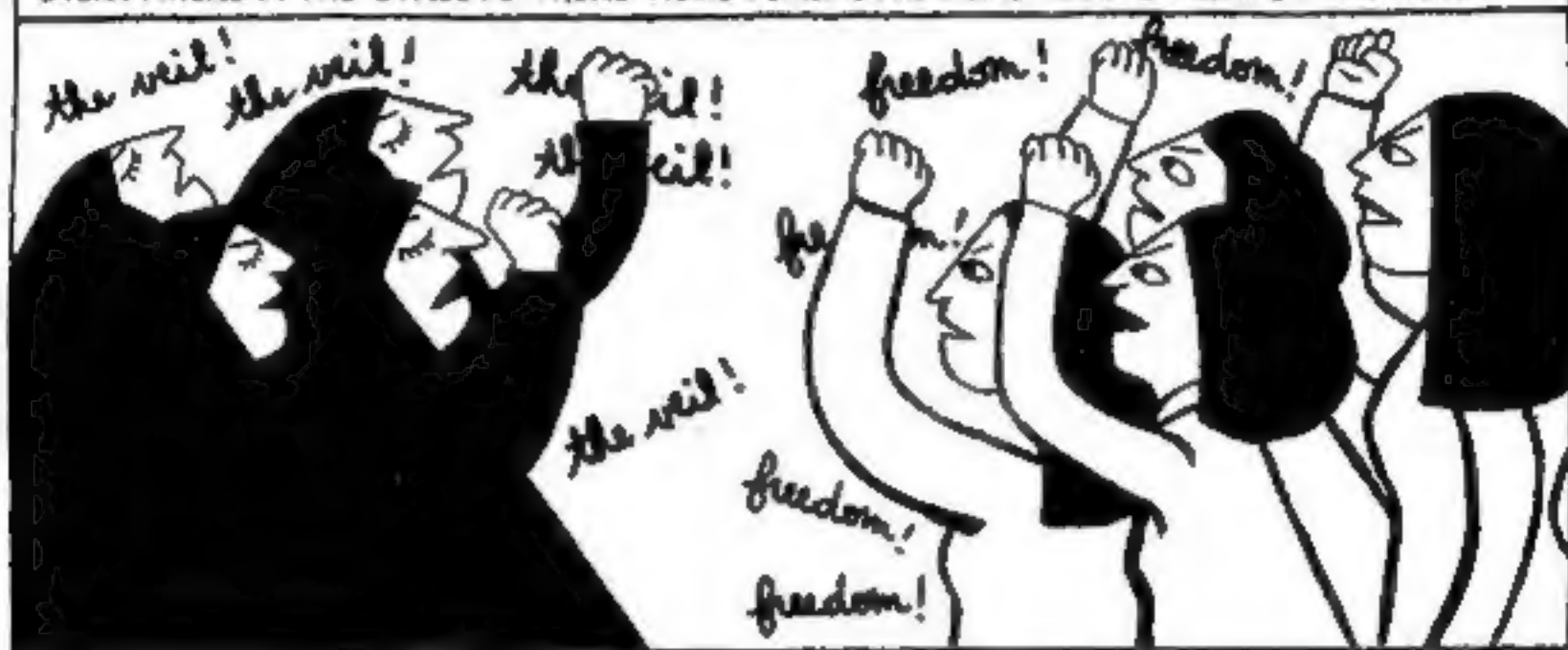
WE FOUND OURSELVES VEILED AND SEPARATED FROM OUR FRIENDS.



AND THAT
WAS THAT...



EVERYWHERE IN THE STREETS THERE WERE DEMONSTRATIONS FOR AND AGAINST THE VEIL.



AT ONE OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS, A GERMAN JOURNALIST TOOK A PHOTO OF MY MOTHER.



I WAS REALLY PROUD OF HER. HER PHOTO WAS PUBLISHED IN ALL THE EUROPEAN NEWSPAPERS.



AND EVEN IN ONE MAGAZINE IN IRAN. MY MOTHER WAS REALLY SCARED.



SHE DYED HER HAIR,



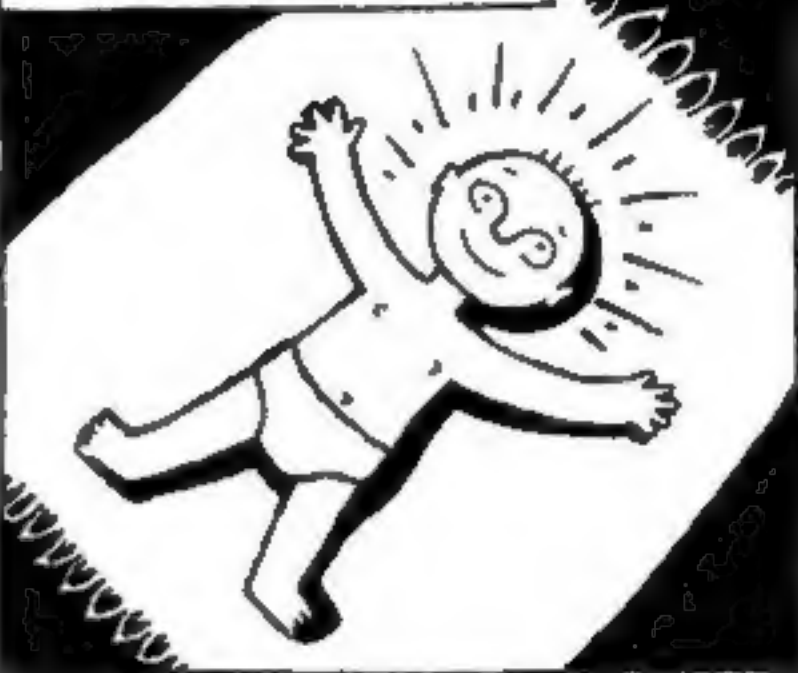
AND WORE DARK GLASSES FOR A LONG TIME.



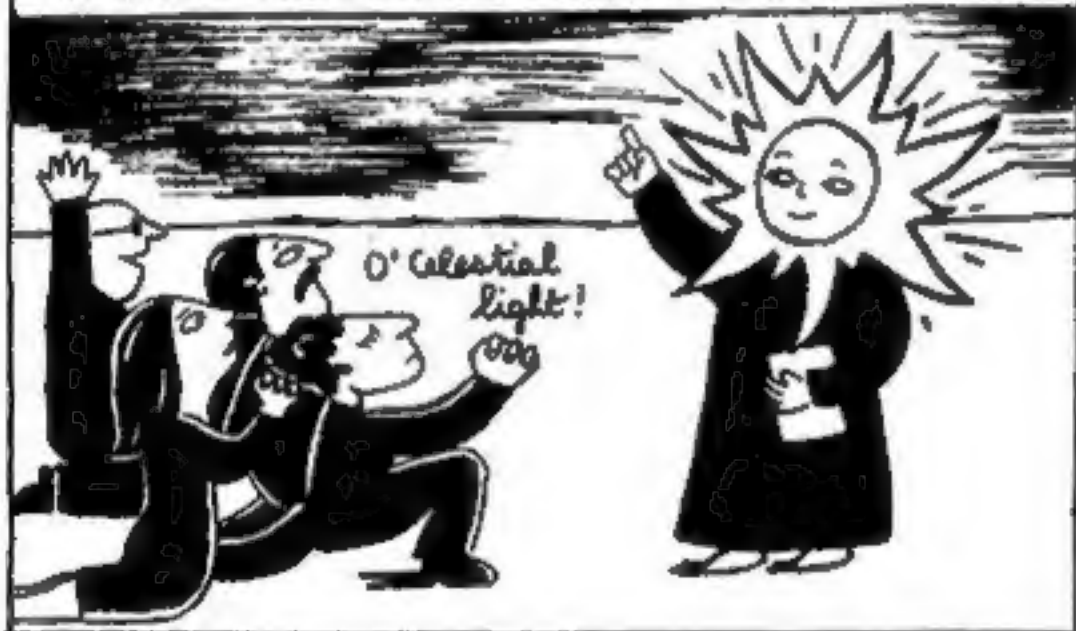
I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK ABOUT THE VEIL. DEEP DOWN I WAS VERY RELIGIOUS BUT AS A FAMILY WE WERE VERY MODERN AND AVANT-GARDE.



I WAS BORN WITH RELIGION.



AT THE AGE OF SIX I WAS ALREADY SURE I WAS THE LAST PROPHET. THIS WAS A FEW YEARS BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.



BEFORE ME THERE HAD BEEN A FEW OTHERS.



A WOMAN?

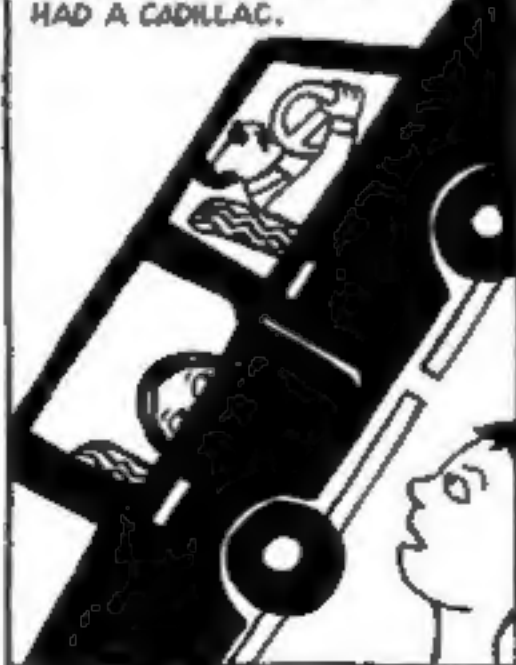


I WANTED TO BE A PROPHET...

BECAUSE OUR MAID DID NOT EAT WITH US.



BECAUSE MY FATHER HAD A CADILLAC.



AND, ABOVE ALL, BECAUSE MY GRANDMOTHER'S KNEES ALWAYS ACHED.

COME HERE MARJI! HELP ME TO STAND UP.

DON'T WORRY, SOON YOU WON'T HAVE ANY MORE PAIN. YOU'LL SEE.



LIKE ALL MY PREDECESSORS
I HAD MY HOLY BOOK.



THE FIRST THREE RULES CAME FROM ZARATHUSTRA. HE WAS
THE FIRST PROPHET IN MY COUNTRY BEFORE THE ARAB INVASION.



I ALSO WANTED US TO CELEBRATE THE TRADITIONAL
ZARATHUSTRIAN HOLIDAYS, LIKE THE FIRE CEREMONY,

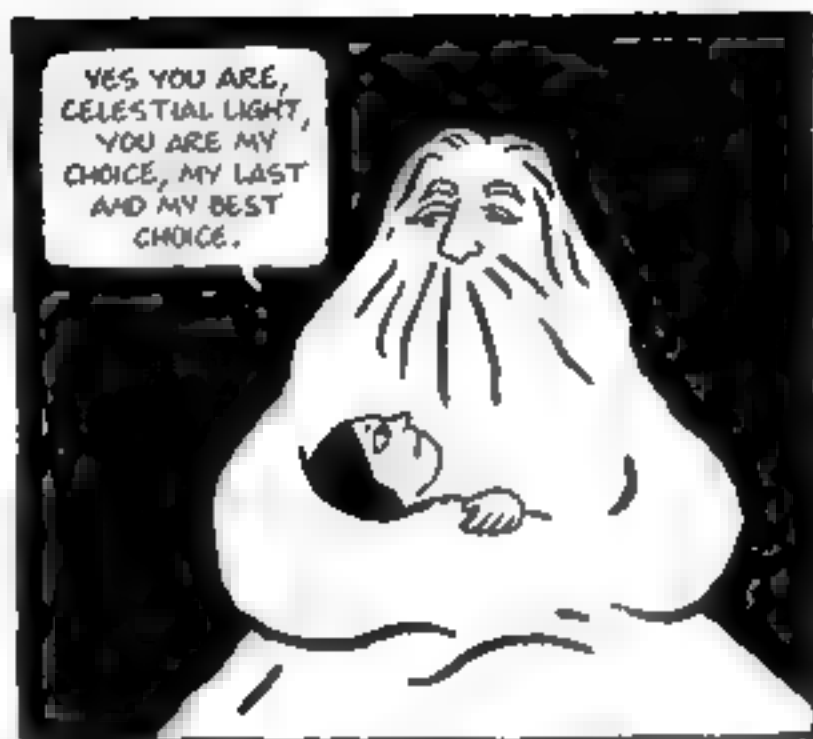


BEFORE THE PERSIAN NEW YEAR, NOROUZ,
ON MARCH 21ST, THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING.



ONLY MY GRANDMOTHER KNEW ABOUT MY BOOK.





NONE THELESS, MY PARENTS WERE PUZZLED.



I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR



THAT'S FINE MY LOVE. THAT'S FINE



FELT GUILTY TOWARDS GOD.



I WANTED TO BE JUSTICE, LOVE AND THE WRATH OF GOD ALL IN ONE.





THE BICYCLE

MY FAITH WAS NOT UNSHAKABLE.



THE YEAR OF THE REVOLUTION I HAD TO TAKE ACTION. SO I PUT MY PROPHETIC DESTINY ASIDE FOR A WHILE.

TODAY MY NAME IS CHE GUEVARA.

I AM FIDEL.

AND I WANT TO BE TROTSKY.



WE DEMONSTRATED IN THE GARDEN OF OUR HOUSE.

DOWN WITH THE KING!

DOWN WITH THE KING!

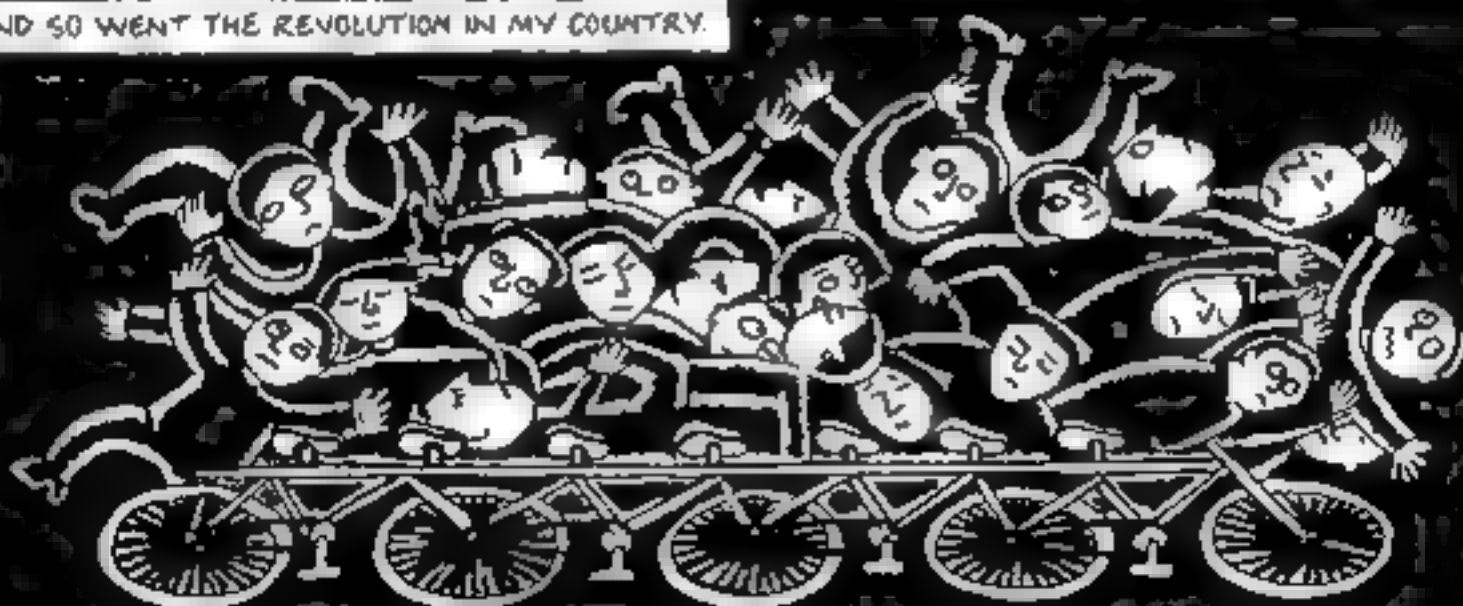


THE REVOLUTION IS LIKE A BICYCLE WHEN THE WHEELS DON'T TURN, IT FALLS.

WELL SPOKEN!



AND SO WENT THE REVOLUTION IN MY COUNTRY.



"AFTER A LONG SLEEP OF 2500 YEARS, THE REVOLUTION HAS FINALLY AWAKENED THE PEOPLE."



"2500 YEARS OF TYRANNY AND SUBMISSION" AS MY FATHER SAID.

FIRST OUR OWN EMPERORS.



THEN THE ARAB INVASION FROM THE WEST.

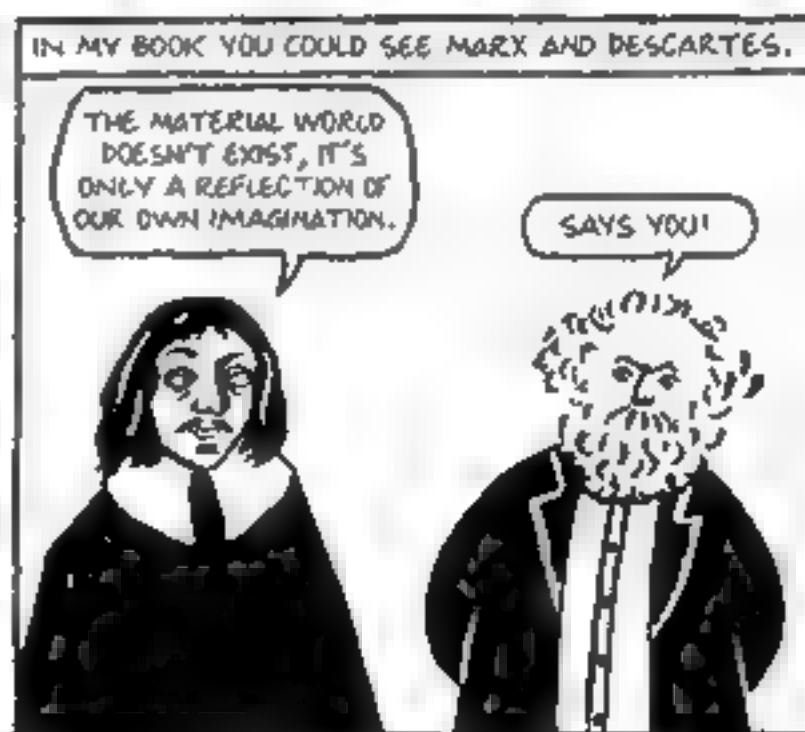
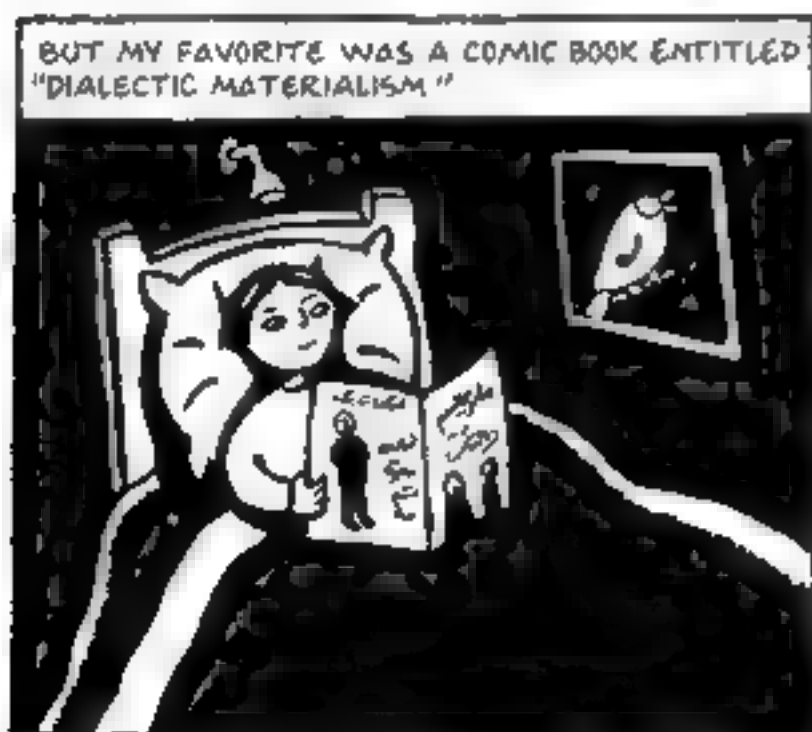


FOLLOWED BY THE MONGOLIAN INVASION FROM THE EAST

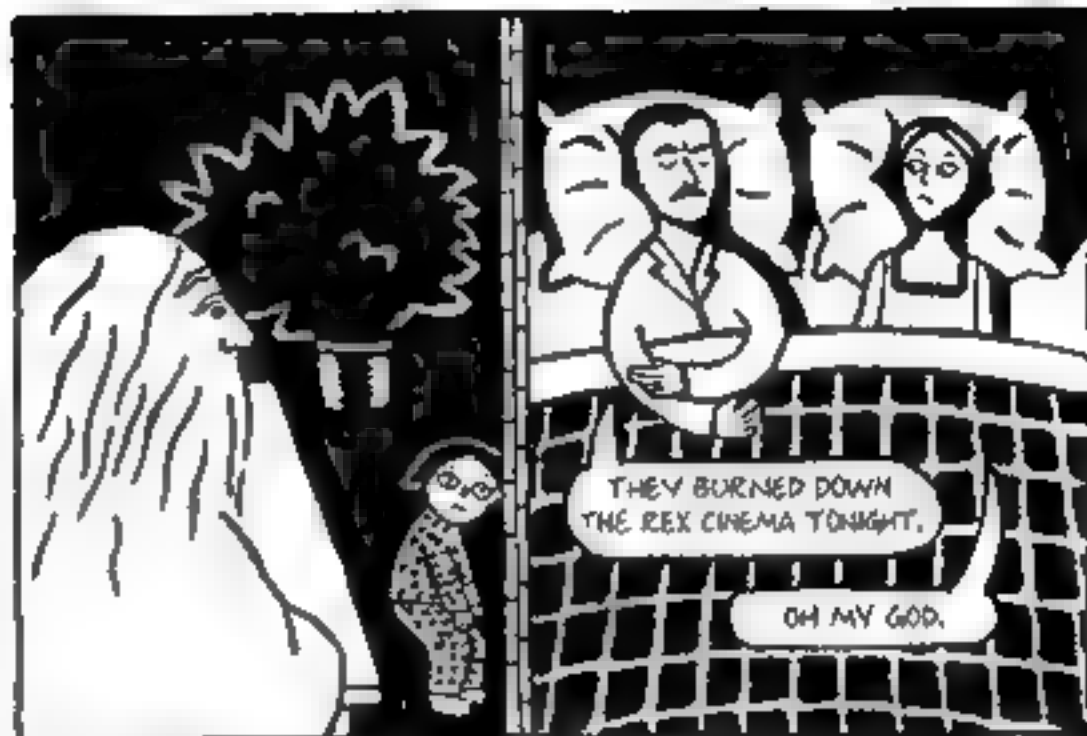


AND FINALLY MODERN IMPERIALISM.









THE FIREMEN DIDN'T ARRIVE UNTIL FORTY MINUTES LATER



THE BBC SAID THERE WERE 400 VICTIMS. THE SHAH SAID THAT A GROUP OF RELIGIOUS FANATICS PERPETRATED THE MASSACRE. BUT THE PEOPLE KNEW THAT IT WAS THE SHAH'S FAULT!!







THE WATER CELL

MY PARENTS DEMONSTRATED EVERY DAY.

DOWN WITH THE KING!



THINGS STARTED TO DEGENERATE
THE ARMY SHOT AT THEM

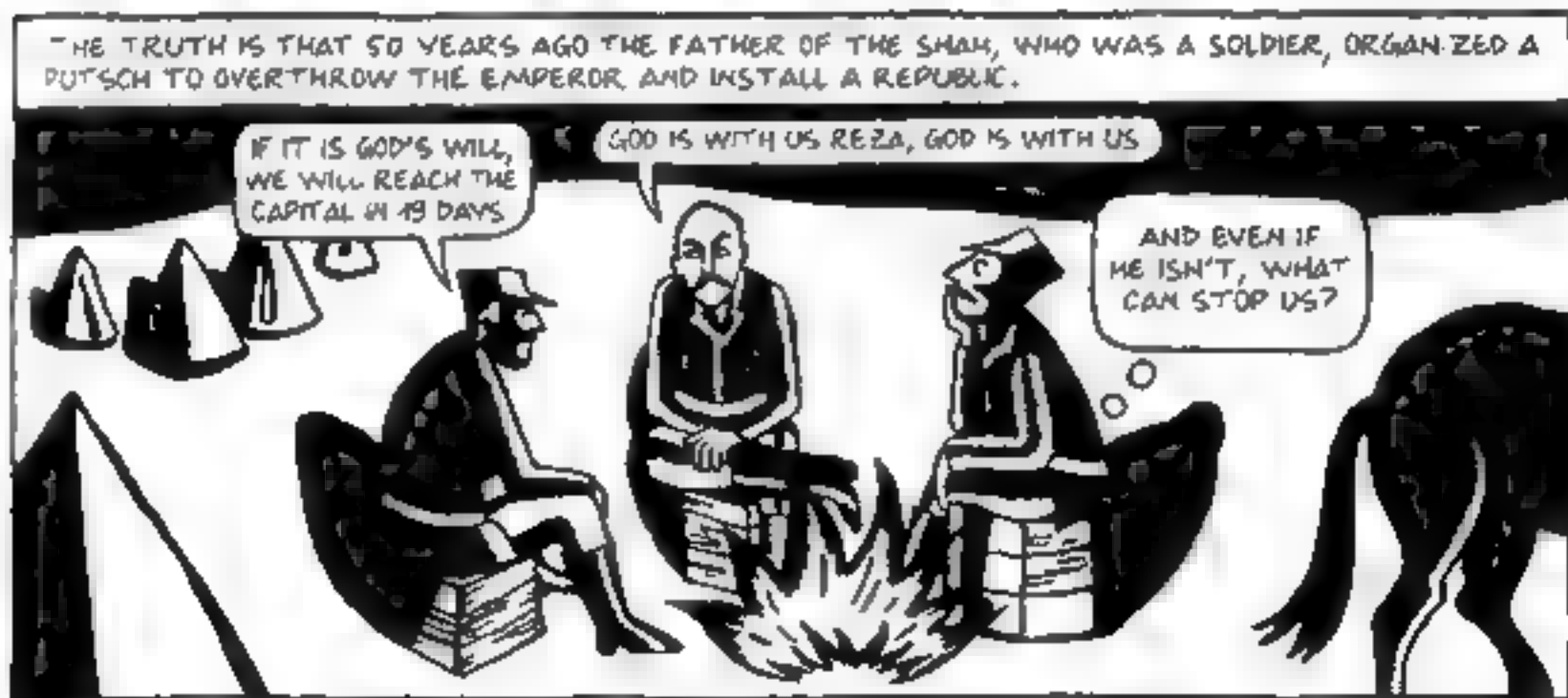


AND THEY THREW STONES AT THE ARMY.



AFTER MARCHING AND THROWING STONES ALL DAY, BY EVENING
THEY HAD ACES ALL OVER, EVEN IN THEIR HEADS.





AT THE TIME THE REPUBLICAN IDEAL WAS POPULAR IN THE REGION BUT EVERYBODY INTERPRETED IT IN HIS OWN WAY.

GANDHI IN INDIA



THE HINDUS
AND THE MUSLIMS
MUST MAKE PEACE
TO OVERTHROW
THE BRITISH.

ATATURK IN TURKEY



WE, THE TURKS,
ARE SECULAR
WESTERNERS
FOR PROOF, LOOK AT
MY GREEN EYES

SO THE FATHER OF THE SHAM
WANTED TO DO THE SAME.



BUT HE WASN'T
EDUCATED LIKE GANDHI,
WHO WAS A LAWYER.



NOR WAS HE A
LEADER OF MEN
LIKE ATATURK, WHO
WAS A GENERAL



HE WAS AN ILLITERATE LOW-RANKING
OFFICER

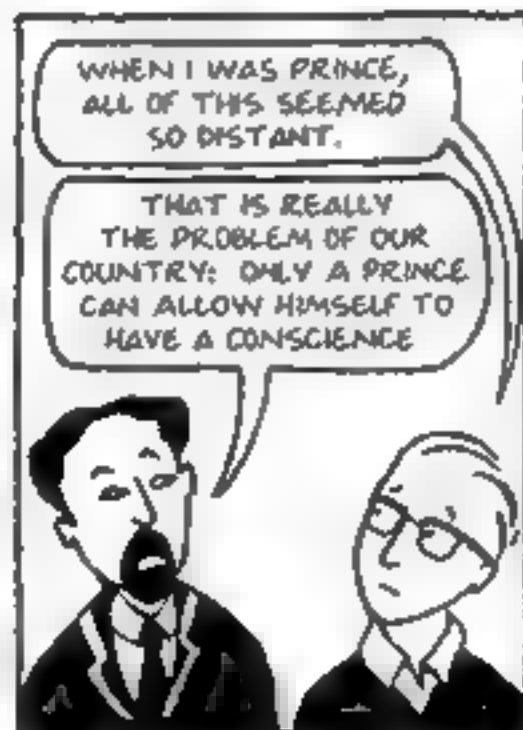
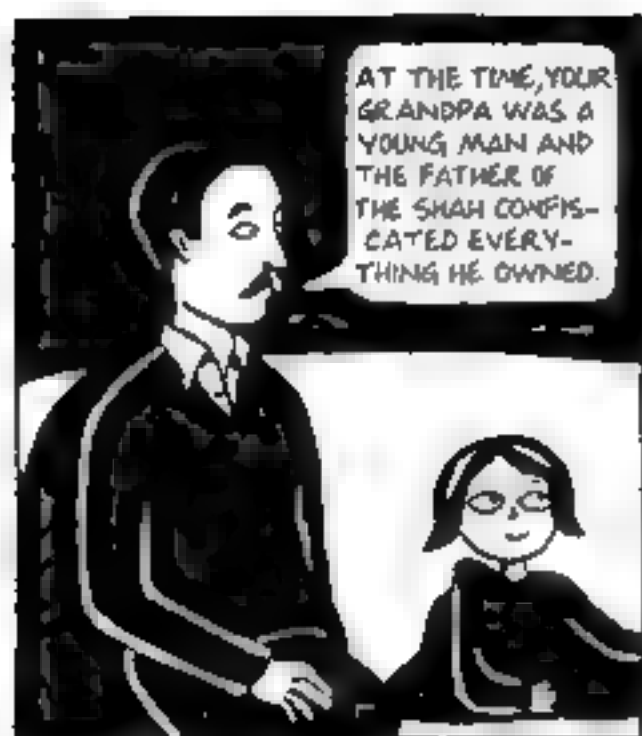


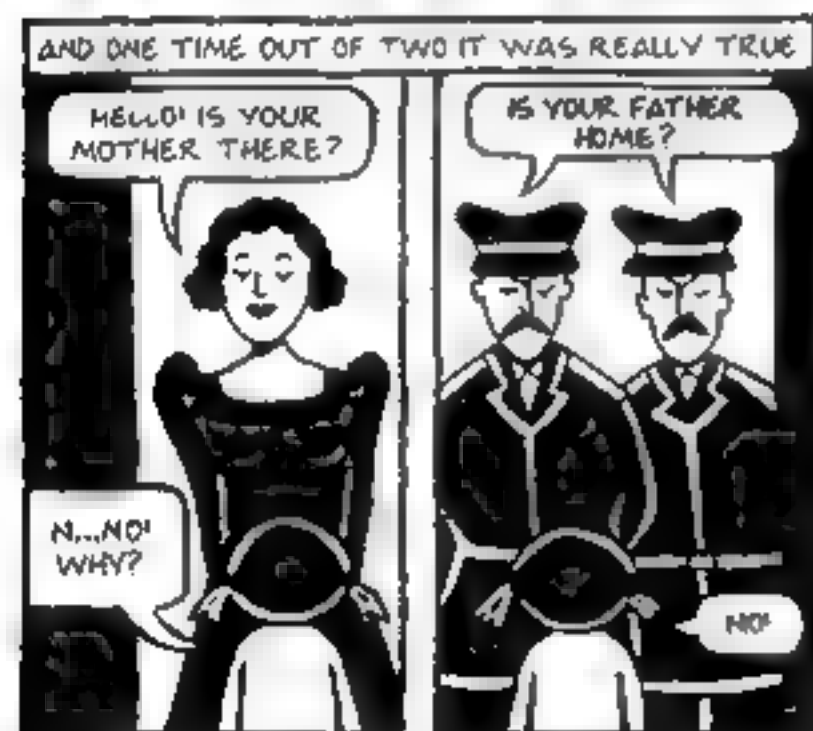
A BLESSING FOR THE VERY INFLUENTIAL BRITISH WHO SOON
LEARNED OF HIS PROJECTS













GIDDYAP!
GIDDYAP!



THE POOR MAN!!!
PRISON HAD
DESTROYED HIS
HEALTH. HE HAD
RHEUMATISM.



ALL HIS LIFE HE
WAS IN PAIN



COME ON THAT
TIME IS PAST



DO YOU WANT TO
PLAY MONOPOLY?



I WANT TO
TAKE A BATH



WE CAN PLAY AFTER YOUR
BATH IF YOU WANT TO

NO! WANT TO
TAKE A REALLY
LONG BATH.



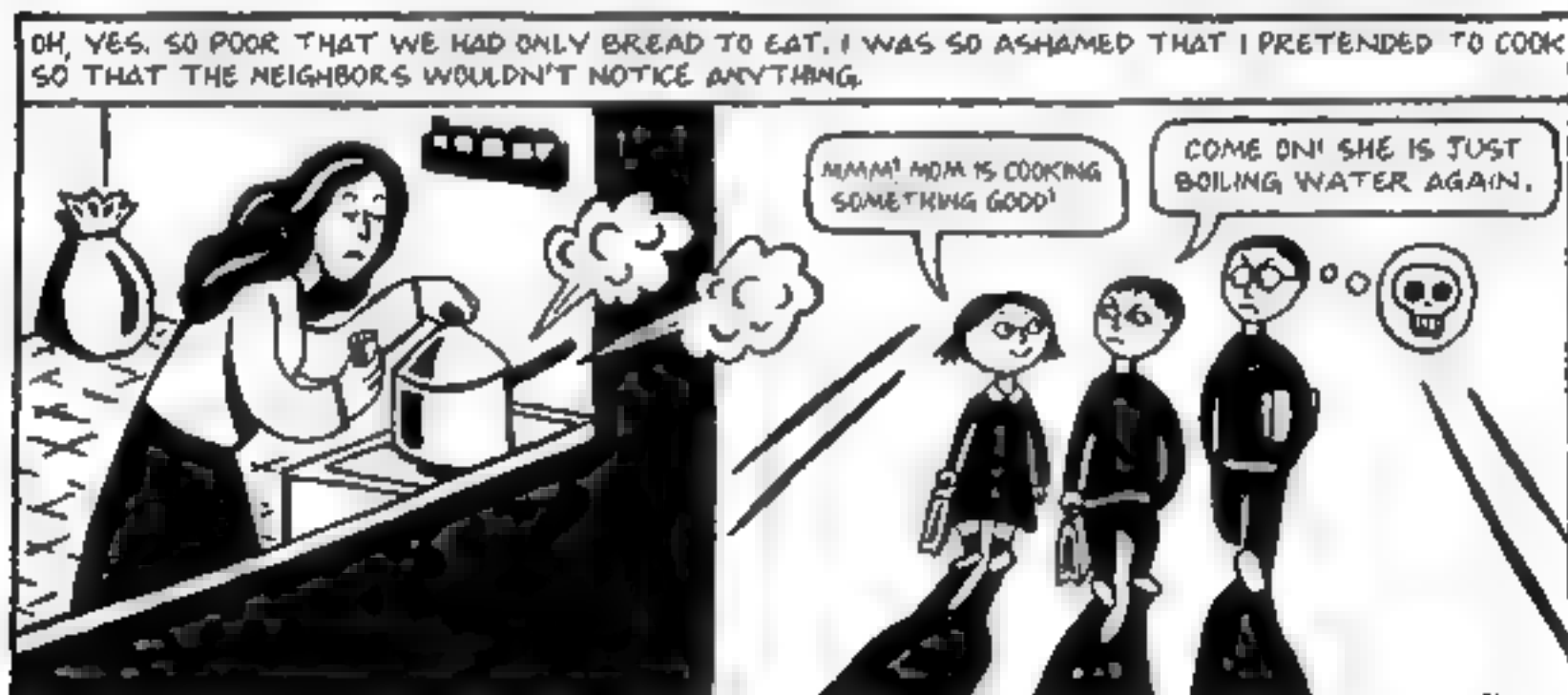
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?



MY HANDS WERE WRINKLED
WHEN I CAME OUT, LIKE
GRANDPA'S.



PERSEPOLIS



TO SURVIVE I TOOK IN SEWING AND WITH LEFTOVER MATERIAL, I MADE CLOTHES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



LOOK HOW WELL DRESSED WE ALL ARE IN THIS PHOTO.



WHY ISN'T GRANDPA THERE? WAS HE IN PRISON?

YES, THE FATHER OF THE SHAH WAS VERY TOUGH BUT HIS SON WAS TEN TIMES WORSE.



EVEN WORSE



YOU KNOW, MY CHILD, SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME, DYNASTIES HAVE SUCCEEDED EACH OTHER BUT THE KINGS ALWAYS KEPT THEIR PROMISES. THE SHAH KEPT NONE, I REMEMBER THE DAY HE WAS CROWNED. HE SAID

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE ARYANS
I WILL MAKE THIS COUNTRY
THE MOST MODERN OF ALL TIME
OUR PEOPLE WILL REGAIN
THEIR SPLENDOR



HE EVEN WENT TO THE GRAVE OF CYRUS THE GREAT, WHO RULED OVER THE ANCIENT WORLD.

CYRUS, REST IN PEACE, WE ARE LOOKING AFTER PERSIA.



ALL THE COUNTRY'S MONEY WENT INTO RIDICULOUS CELEBRATIONS OF THE 2500 YEARS OF DYNASTY AND OTHER FRIVOLITIES... ALL OF THIS TO IMPRESS HEADS OF STATE; THE POPULATION COULDN'T HAVE CARED LESS



I AM SO HAPPY THAT THERE IS FINALLY A REVOLUTION BECAUSE THE SHAH .

I'M HUNGRY!



I BOUGHT YOU SOME BOOKS. YOU WILL SEE WHY THE PEOPLE ARE REVOLTING.

SHE WON'T TELL ME ABOUT GRANDPA





HE TOOK PHOTOS EVERY DAY IT WAS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. HE HAD EVEN BEEN ARRESTED ONCE BUT ESCAPED AT THE LAST MINUTE

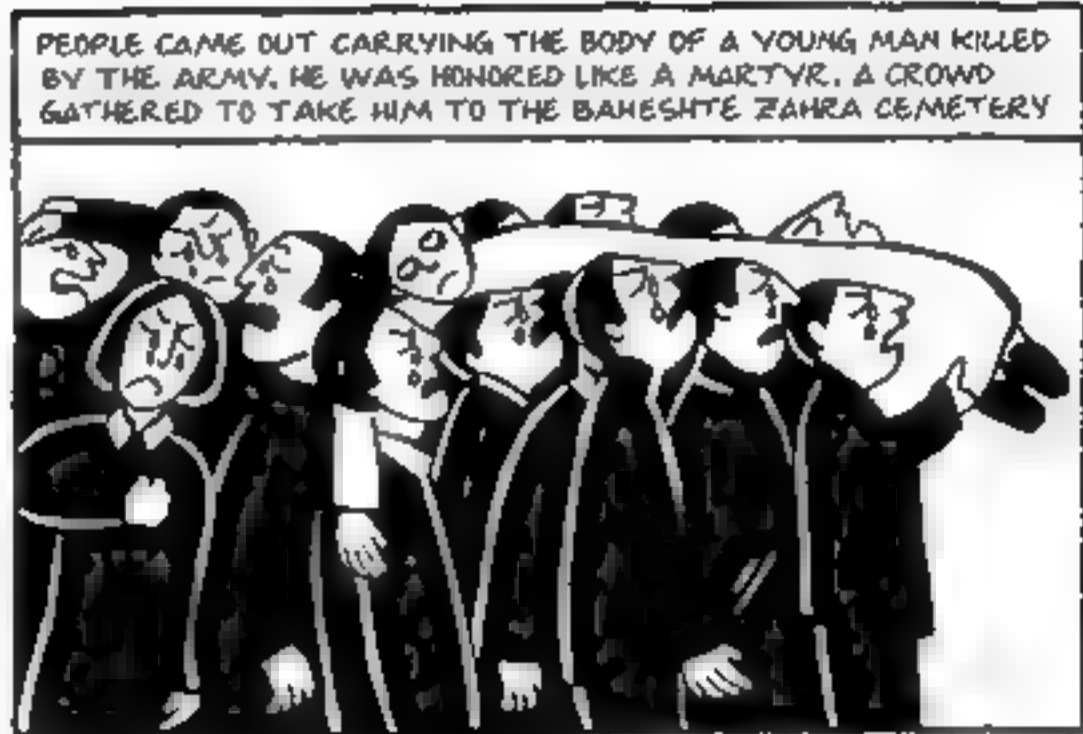


WE WAITED FOR HIM FOR HOURS. THERE WAS THE SAME SILENCE AS BEFORE A STORM.



THOUGHT THAT MY FATHER WAS DEAD THAT THEY HAD SHOT HIM.





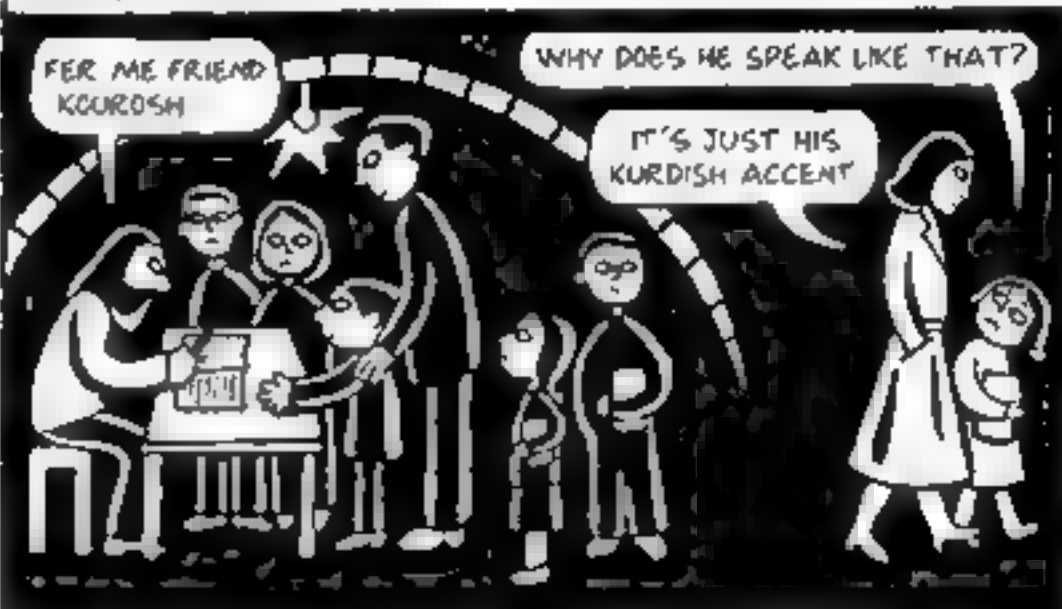


THE LETTER

I'D NEVER READ AS MUCH AS I DID DURING THAT PERIOD.



MY FAVORITE AUTHOR WAS ALI ASHRAF DARVISHIAN, A KIND OF LOCAL CHARLES DICKENS. I WENT TO HIS CLANDESTINE BOOK-SIGNING WITH MY MOTHER.



HE TOLD SAD BUT TRUE STORIES. REZA BECAME A PORTER AT THE AGE OF TEN.



LENA WOVE CARPETS AT AGE FIVE.



MASSAN, THREE YEARS OLD, CLEANED CAR WINDOWS.



I FINALLY UNDERSTOOD WHY I FELT ASHAMED TO SIT IN MY FATHER'S CADILLAC.



THE REASON FOR MY SHAME AND FOR THE REVOLUTION IS THE SAME. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASSES.



BUT NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, WE HAVE A MAID AT HOME!!!





AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION, IN 1978, SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH THE NEIGHBOR'S SON. SHE WAS SIXTEEN YEARS OLD.



EVERY NIGHT THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER FROM THE WINDOW OF MY ROOM.



UNTIL THE DAY HE SLIPPED HER A LETTER.



LIKE MOST PEASANTS, SHE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO READ AND WRITE ..



MY MOTHER HAD TRIED TO TEACH HER BUT APPARENTLY SHE WAS NOT VERY TALENTED



SO I WROTE THE LETTERS FOR HER ONE EACH WEEK FOR SIX MONTHS



I WAS VERY DEVOTED.

MEHRI HAD A REAL SISTER, ONE YEAR YOUNGER, WHO WORKED AT MY UNCLE'S HOUSE.

YOU KNOW, I HAVE A FIANCE.

OH REALLY, WHO?



AFTER A FEW VISITS, SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM TOO.



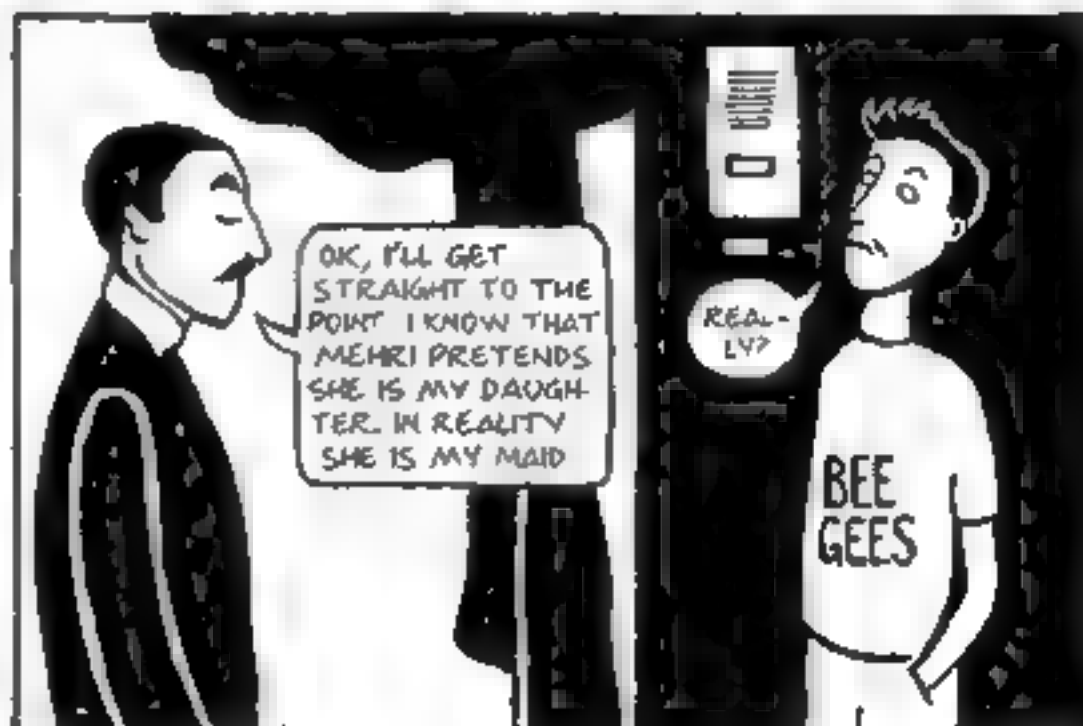
HER JEALOUSY WAS MORE THAN SHE COULD BEAR AND SHE TOLD MEHRI'S STORY TO MY UNCLE, WHO TOLD IT TO MY GRANDMA, WHO TOLD IT TO MY MOM. THAT IS HOW THE STORY REACHED MY FATHER



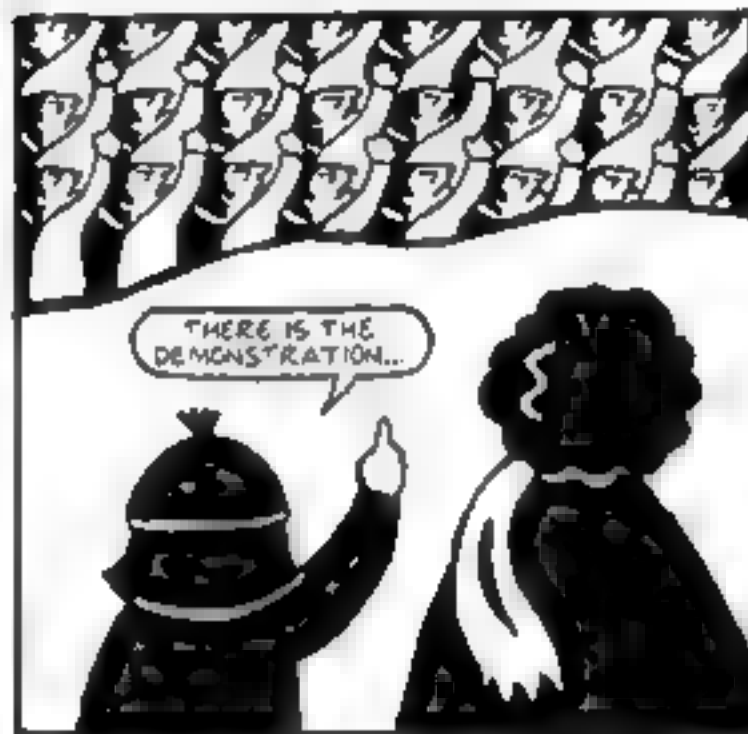
.. WHO DECIDED TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION

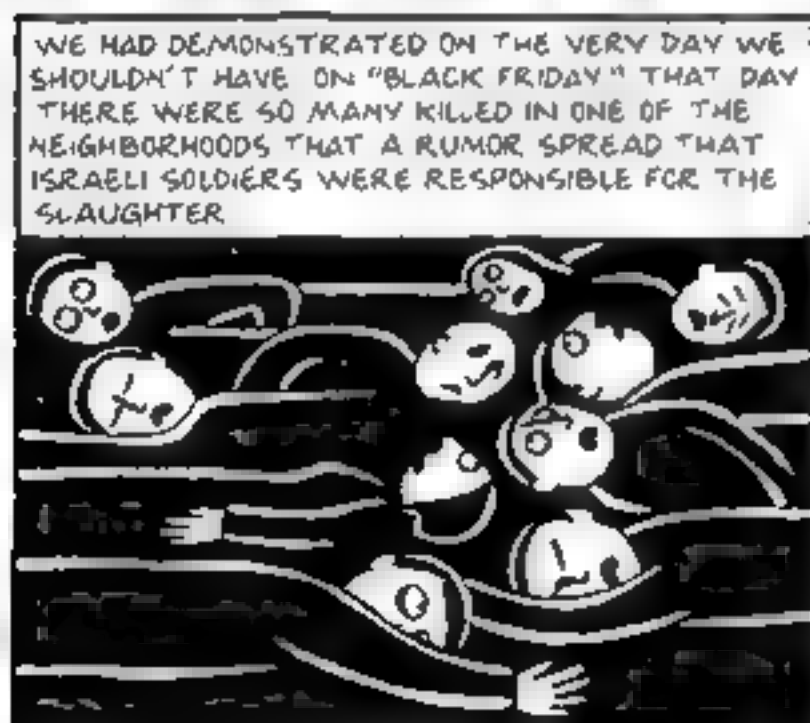
WHO'S THERE?

I AM YOUR NEIGHBOR. I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A FEW WORDS WITH YOUR SON



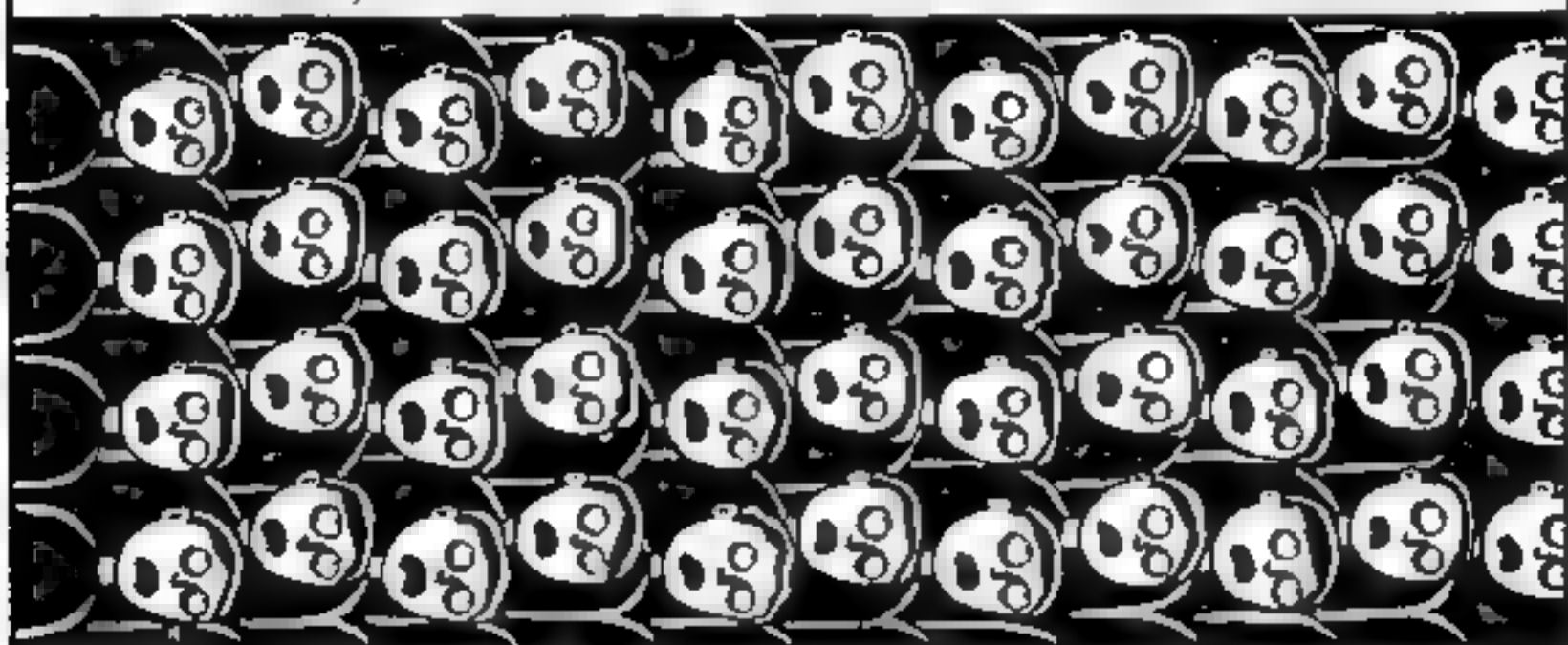




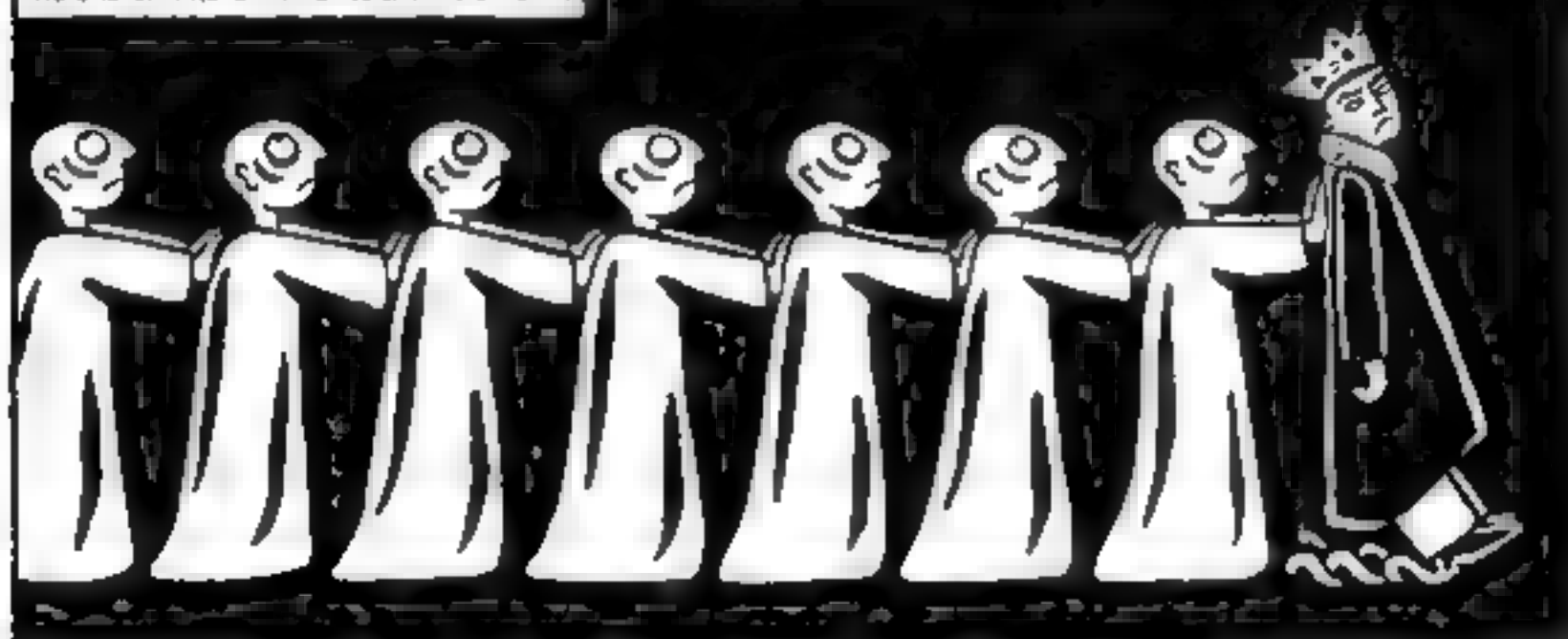


THE PARTY

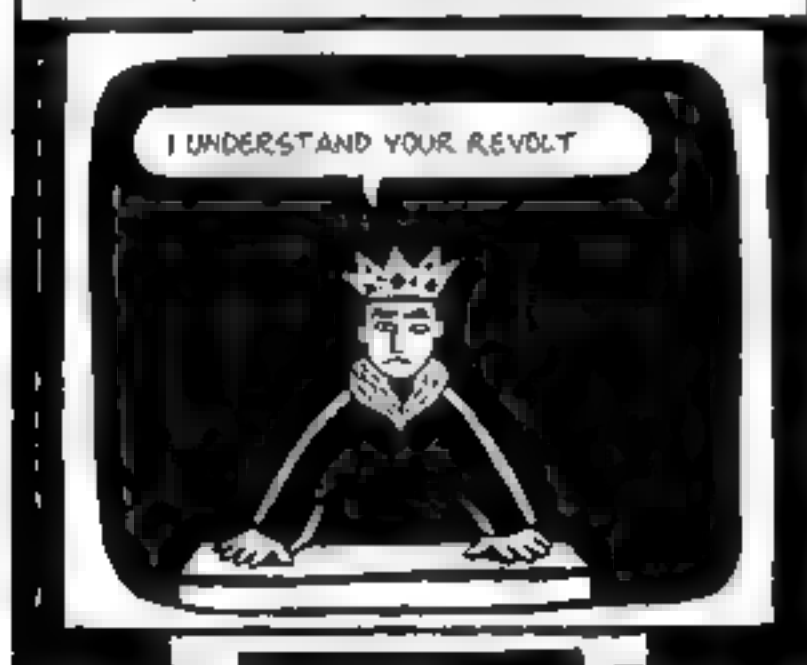
AFTER BLACK FRIDAY, THERE WAS ONE MASSACRE AFTER ANOTHER. MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED.

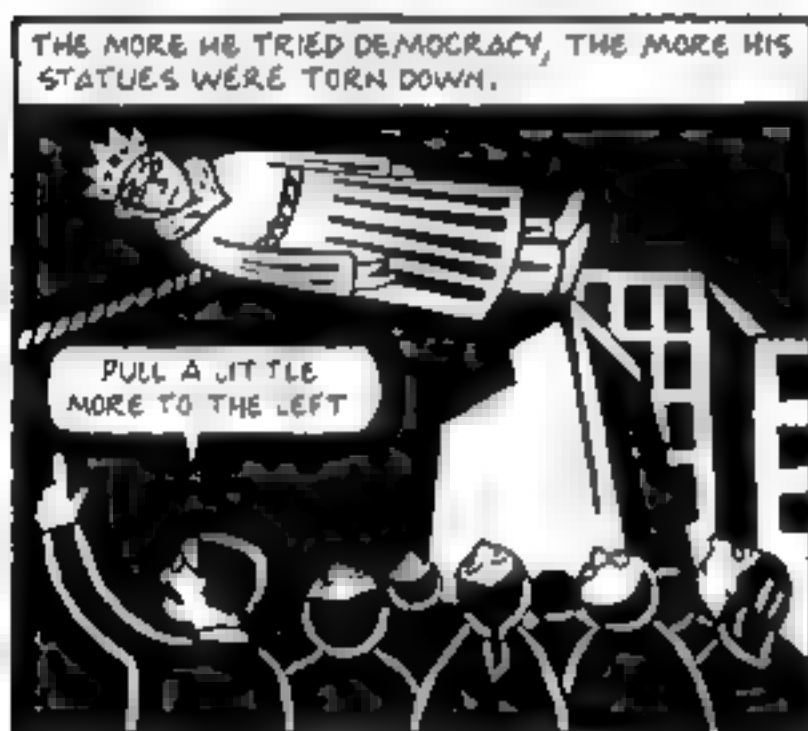
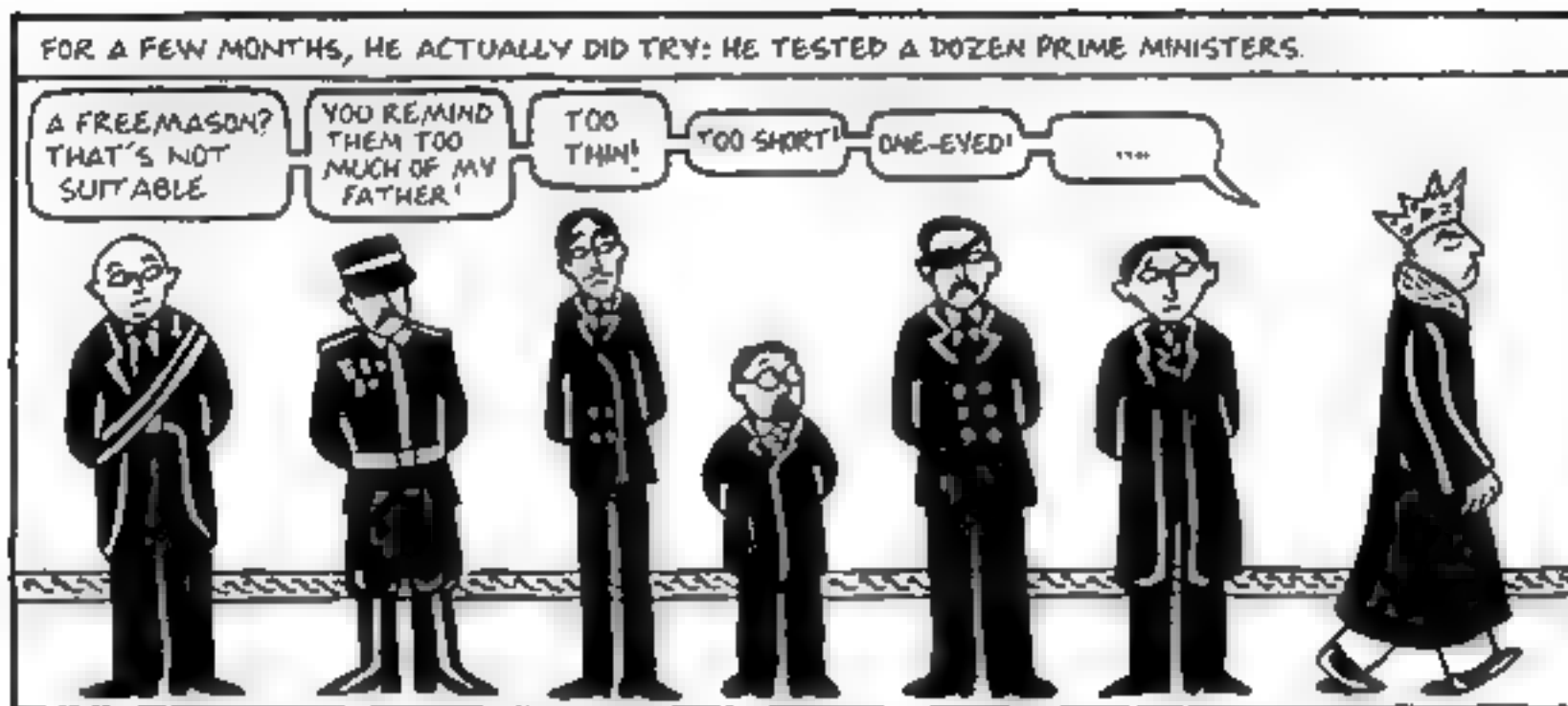


THE END OF THE SHAH'S REIGN WAS NEAR.



ONE DAY HE MADE A DECLARATION ON TV





THE DAY HE LEFT, THE COUNTRY HAD THE BIGGEST CELEBRATION OF ITS ENTIRE HISTORY





AFTER ALL THIS JOY, A MAJOR MISFORTUNE TOOK PLACE: THE SCHOOLS, CLOSED DURING THIS PERIOD, REOPENED AND...



BUT SHE WAS THE ONE WHO TOLD US THAT THE SHAH WAS CHOSEN BY GOD!



TEACHER! SHE SAYS THAT THE SHAH WAS CHOSEN BY GOD!
SATRAPI! YOU SHOULDN'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT. STAND IN THE CORNER!



THESE STRANGE PHENOMENA WERE EVERYWHERE.



LOOK! A BULLET ALMOST HIT MY WIFE'S CHEEK. LIBERTY IS PRICELESS.



WHAT NERVE! SHE ALWAYS HAD THAT NASTY SPOT. IF WE WEREN'T NEIGHBORS, HE WOULD HAVE SAID SHE'S A MARTYR RAISED FROM THE DEAD.



THE BATTLE WAS OVER FOR OUR PARENTS BUT NOT FOR US.



* SECRET POLICE OF THE SHAH'S REGIME.







THE HEROES

THE POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE LIBERATED A FEW DAYS LATER THERE WERE 3000 OF THEM.



WE KNEW TWO OF THEM.



SIAMAK JARI

BORN
FEBRUARY 20, 1945

IN LURISTAN

PROFESSION:
JOURNALIST

~~WAS WRITING~~
SUBVERSIVE ARTICLES
IN THE KEYHAN

DATE OF IMPRISONMENT
JULY 1973

RELEASED: MARCH 1979

POLITICAL CONVICTION:
COMMUNIST



MOHSEN SHAKIBA

BORN
NOVEMBER 22, 1947

IN RAQAT

PROFESSION:
REVOLUTIONARY

~~WAS WRITING~~
REVOLUTIONARY

DATE OF IMPRISONMENT
APRIL 1971

RELEASED: MARCH 1979

POLITICAL CONVICTION:
COMMUNIST



AFTER THE REVOLUTION I REALIZED THAT YOU COULD BE MISTAKEN.

TODAY IS A GREAT DAY, DARLING. WE'VE INVITED LALY'S FATHER AND MOHSEN. THEY BOTH JUST LEFT PRISON.

LALY'S FATHER?

WHAT DOES HE LOOK LIKE?

YOU'LL SOON FIND OUT

DING! DONG!

SIAMAK!

I'M SO HAPPY THAT YOU ARE BACK. DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

DON'T SAY ANYTHING I KNOW

OH TAJI STILL A BEAUTY!

STILL A FLATTERER!

AND THIS MUST BE MARJI. LORD! THE LAST TIME I SAW HER SHE WAS ONLY THREE YEARS OLD

TIME IS IRRETRIEVABLE WHEN THEY ARRESTED ME, LALY BARELY SPOKE AND NOW SHE IS A REAL YOUNG LADY

NEW! YES

YES

YOU WANT TO PLAY?

NO

DING! DONG!

THAT MUST BE MOHSEN



THEY WHIPPED ME WITH THICK ELECTRIC CABLES SO MUCH THAT THIS LOOKS LIKE ANYTHING BUT A FOOT



NOT TO MENTION PUTTING OUT THEIR CIGARETTES ON OUR BACKS AND THIGHS.



MY PARENTS WERE SO SHOCKED...



THAT THEY FORGOT TO SPARE ME THIS EXPERIENCE...

ANY NEWS OF AHMADI?



AHMADI.. AHMADI WAS ASSASSINATED. AS A MEMBER OF THE GUERRILLAS, HE SUFFERED HELL. HE ALWAYS HAD CYANIDE ON HIM IN CASE HE WAS ARRESTED, BUT HE WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE AND UNFORTUNATELY HE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO USE IT... SO HE SUFFERED THE WORST TORTURE..



HOW DO YOU LIKE THIS?

CONFESS! WHERE ARE THE OTHERS!

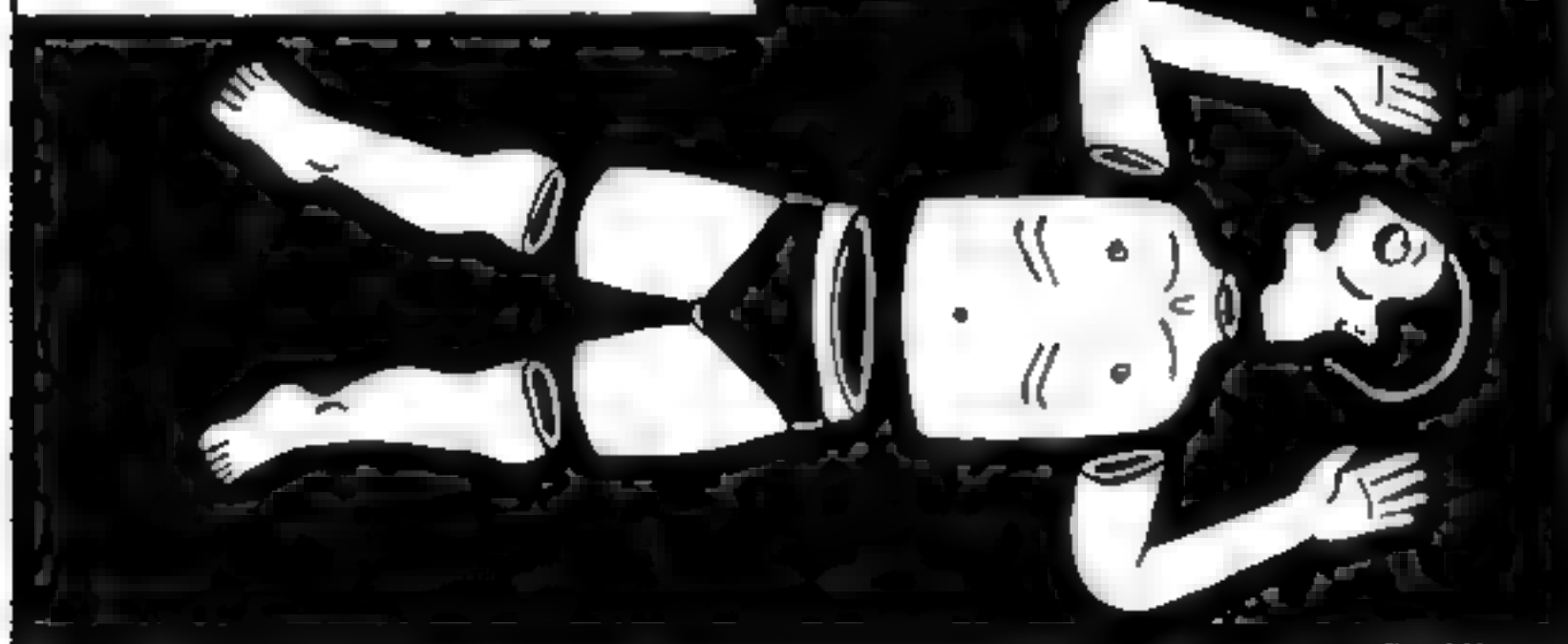


THEY BURNED HIM WITH AN IRON.



I NEVER IMAGINED THAT YOU COULD USE THAT APPLIANCE FOR TORTURE.

IN THE END HE WAS CUT TO PIECES.



HE WAS IN MY CLASS AT THE UNIVERSITY



BUT YOU HAVE TO ADMIT I WASN'T COMPLETELY WRONG WHEN I SAID HE WAS NOT ON A TRIP.



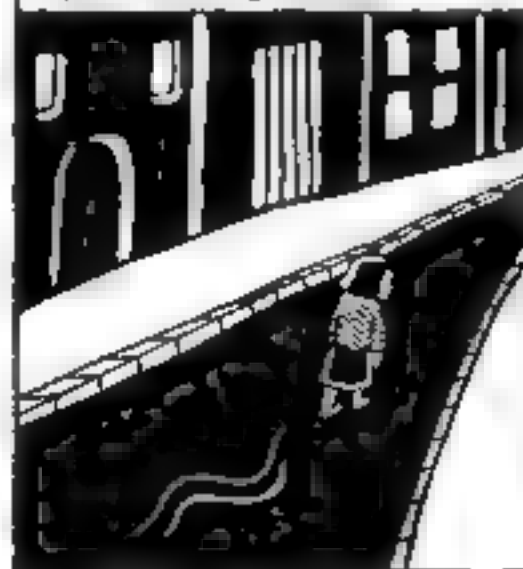
MAYBE, BUT MY FATHER IS A HERO!



ALL TORTURERS SHOULD BE MASSACRED!



MY FATHER WAS NOT A HERO, MY MOTHER WANTED TO KILL PEOPLE SO I WENT OUT TO PLAY IN THE STREET



THOSE STORIES HAD GIVEN ME NEW IDEAS FOR GAMES.

THE ONE WHO LOSSES
WILL BE TORTURED.

YEAH!

WHAT KIND
OF TORTURE?

I HAVE IMAGINA-
TION TOO. THE
MUSTACHE-ON-
FIRE TORTURE
CONSISTS OF
PULLING ON THE
TWO SIDES OF
THE UPPER LIP.

THE TWISTED ARM.

THE MOUTH FILLED
WITH GARBAGE.

BACK AT HOME THAT EVENING, I HAD
THE DIABOLICAL FEELING OF POWER.

BUT IT DIDN'T LAST. I
WAS OVERWHELMED

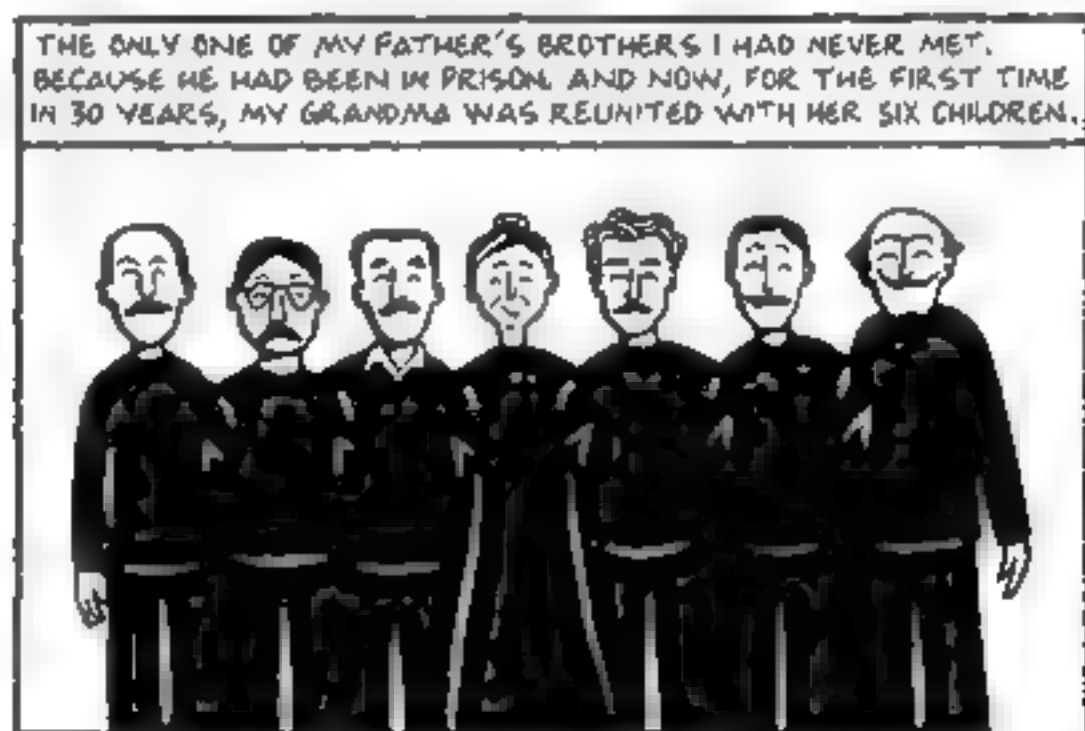
DON'T CRY DARLING, THEY WILL
PAY FOR WHAT THEY HAVE DONE

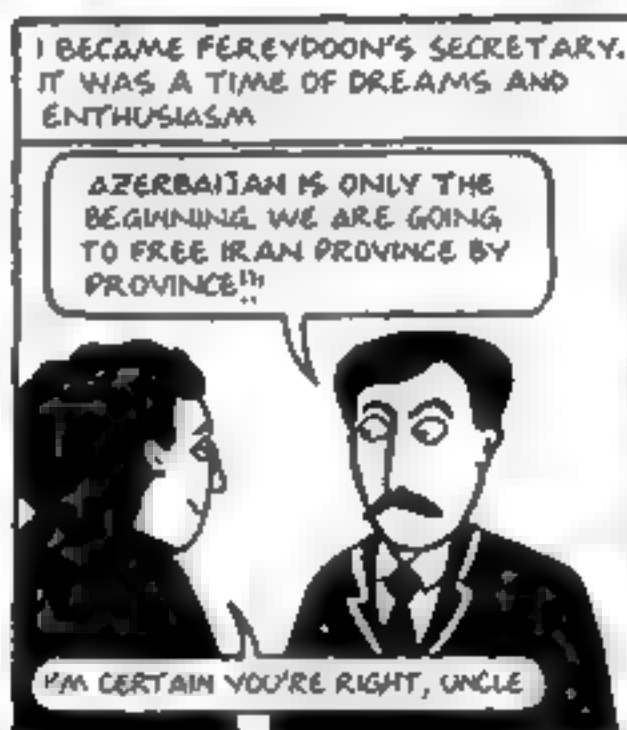
BUT I
THOUGHT
ONE SHOULD
FORGIVE

BAD PEOPLE ARE
DANGEROUS BUT
FORGIVING THEM IS
TOO. DON'T WORRY,
THERE IS JUSTICE
ON EARTH

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT JUSTICE WAS. NOW THAT THE
REVOLUTION WAS FINALLY OVER ONCE AND FOR ALL,
I ABANDONED THE DIALECTIC MATERIALISM OF MY
COMIC STRIPS. THE ONLY PLACE I FELT SAFE WAS
IN THE ARMS OF MY FRIEND.

MOSCOW





I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING... BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO... THEY ARRESTED HIM AND I RAN AWAY

WHAT A STORY!



FOR DAYS AND DAYS I WALKED THROUGH THE FALLING SNOW. I CROSSED THE ALBORZ MOUNTAINS TO FIND REFUGE AT MY PARENTS' HOUSE IN ASTARA.



I WAS HUNGRY I WAS COLD, BUT I CONTINUED



I WAS NEARLY DEAD WHEN I ARRIVED.



MY GOD! ANOOSH!



WHAT'S GOING ON? WHO'S BOTHERING US AT THIS HOUR?

COME QUICKLY! IT'S OUR SON ANOOSH HE HAS FAINTED!



WHAT IS HE DOING HERE? WHY DIDN'T HE STAY WITH HIS NICE UNCLE?





AT THE TIME HE HAD A GIRLFRIEND WHO WAS INVOLVED IN HIS POLITICAL MOVEMENT & GIRL FROM A GOOD FAMILY



FEREYDOON, YOU HAVE A VISITOR

MY LOVE .

MY DARLING, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME, YOU ARE MAKING IT WORSE FOR YOURSELF



LET'S MAKE A CHILD



HERE? RIGHT NOW?

YES, I PAID THE GUARD. HE WON'T BOTHER US.



I AM GOING TO BE EXECUTED TOMORROW



I KNOW, I WANT A LIVING MEMORY OF YOU



YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE AN UNMARRIED MOTHER IN THIS COUNTRY. YOU WILL BE SHUNNED, LIFE WILL BE HELL.

I DON'T CARE LET'S MAKE A CHILD.



SHE BECAME PREGNANT THAT VERY NIGHT AND LEFT FOR SWITZERLAND SOON AFTER I KNOW THAT SHE HAD A SON I HEARD HE LOOKS A LOT LIKE HIS FATHER



ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

EHM, DO YOU HAVE OTHER STORIES LIKE THAT?

...? YES.

I'LL MAKE YOU A HOT CHOCOLATE.





AFTER THE SEPARATION, I FELT VERY LONELY I MISSED MY COUNTRY, MY PARENTS, MY BROTHERS. I DREAMT ABOUT THEM OFTEN.



I DECIDED TO GO HOME, I GOT A FALSE PASSPORT AND DISGUISED MYSELF.



I GUESS I WASN'T VERY CONVINCING. THEY SOON RECOGNIZED ME.



THEY PUT ME IN PRISON FOR NINE YEARS



THEY SAY YOU WERE TORTURED TERRIBLY, LIKE SIAMAK, LALY'S FATHER

YOUR FATHER TOLD YOU THAT?



NO, HE TOLD IT TO MOM AND I HEARD HIM.

WHAT MY WIFE MADE ME SUFFER WAS MUCH WORSE.



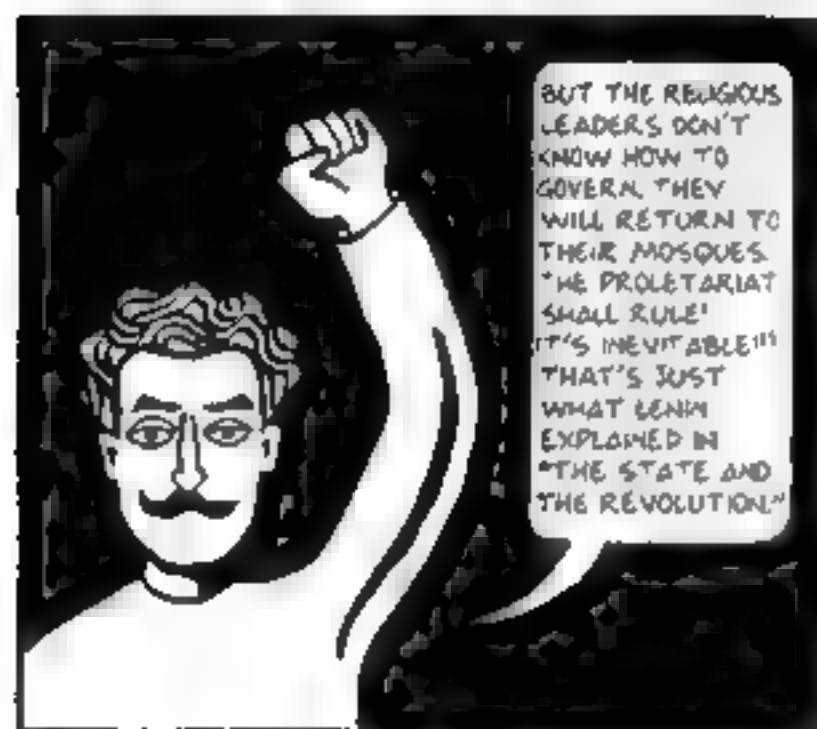
I TELL YOU ALL THIS BECAUSE IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU KNOW. OUR FAMILY MEMORY MUST NOT BE LOST EVEN IF IT'S NOT EASY FOR YOU, EVEN IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IT ALL.

DON'T WORRY, I'LL NEVER FORGET





THE SHEEP

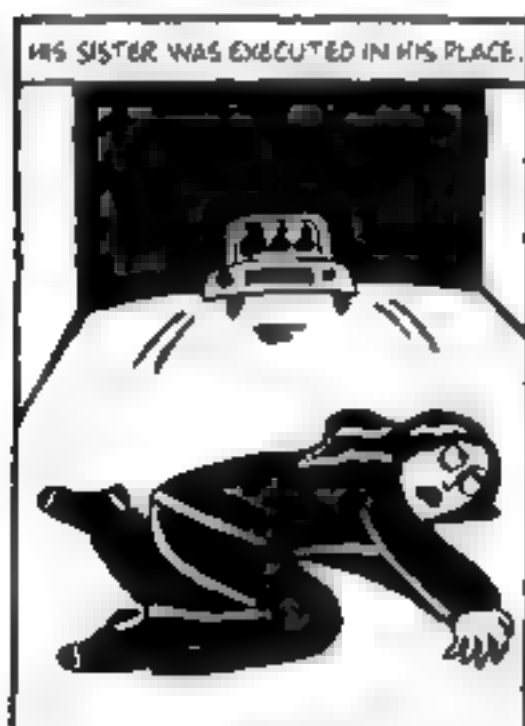




AFTER MY FRIEND'S DEPARTURE, A GOOD PART OF MY FAMILY ALSO LEFT THE COUNTRY.













THAT WAS MY LAST MEETING WITH MY BELOVED ANDOSH...



AND SO I WAS LOST, WITHOUT ANY BEARINGS... WHAT COULD BE WORSE THAN THAT?



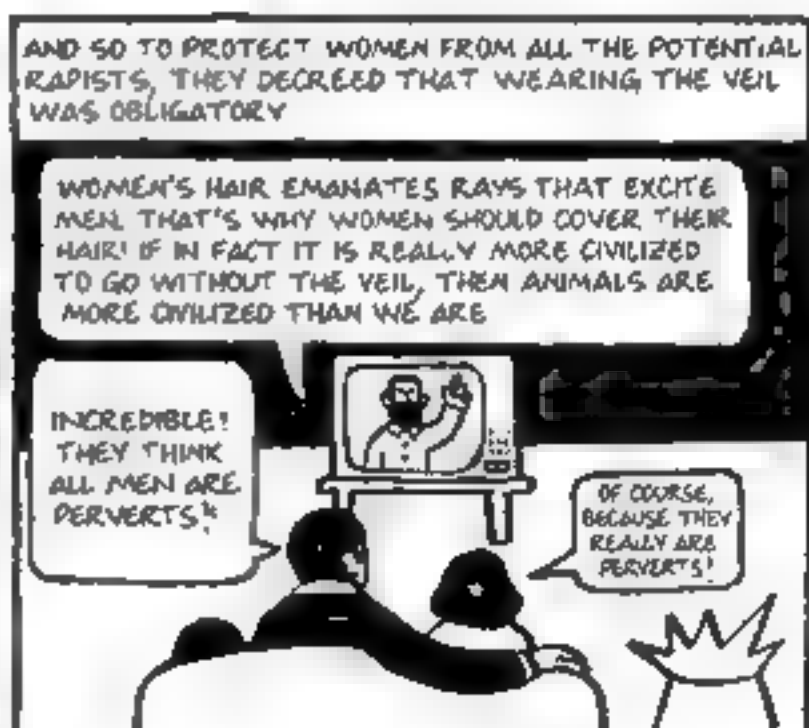
MARJI, RUN TO
THE BASEMENT!
WE'RE BEING
BOMBED!

IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

THE TRIP







IN NO TIME, THE WAY PEOPLE DRESSED BECAME AN IDEOLOGICAL SIGN. THERE WERE TWO KINDS OF WOMEN.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST WOMAN



THE MODERN WOMAN



YOU SHOWED YOUR OPPOSITION TO THE REGIME BY LETTING A FEW STRANDS OF HAIR SHOW.

THERE WERE ALSO TWO SORTS OF MEN.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST MAN



BEARD

SHIRT HANGING OUT

THE PROGRESSIVE MAN

SHAVED, WITH OR WITHOUT MUSTACHE

SHIRT TUCKED IN



ISLAM IS MORE OR LESS AGAINST SHAVING

BUT LET'S BE FAIR. IF WOMEN FACED PRISON WHEN THEY REFUSED TO WEAR THE VEIL, IT WAS ALSO FORBIDDEN FOR MEN TO WEAR NECKTIES (THAT DREADED SYMBOL OF THE WEST). AND IF WOMEN'S HAIR GOT MEN EXCITED, THE SAME THING COULD BE SAID OF MEN'S BARE ARMS. AND SO, WEARING SHORT-SLEEVED SHIRTS WAS ALSO FORBIDDEN.



THERE WAS A KIND OF JUSTICE, AFTER ALL.

IT WASN'T ONLY THE GOVERNMENT THAT CHANGED ORDINARY PEOPLE CHANGED TOO.



LOOK AT HER! LAST YEAR SHE WAS WEARING A MINISKIRT, SHOWING OFF HER BEEFY THIGHS TO THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD. AND NOW MADAME IS WEARING A CHADOR. IT SUITS HER BETTER, I GUESS.

AS FOR HER FUNDAMENTALIST HUSBAND WHO DRANK HIMSELF INTO A STUPOR EVERY NIGHT, NOW HE USES MOUTHWASH EVERY TIME HE UTTERS THE WORD "ALCOHOL"

AND THEIR SON SAYS HE PRAYS EVERY DAY!



IF ANYONE EVER ASKS YOU WHAT YOU DO DURING THE DAY, SAY YOU PRAY, YOU UNDERSTAND??

OK...



AT FIRST, IT WAS A LITTLE HARD, BUT I LEARNED TO LIE QUICKLY.

I PRAY FIVE TIMES A DAY

ME? TEN OR ELEVEN TIMES... SOMETIMES TWELVE





THINGS GOT WORSE FROM ONE DAY TO THE NEXT. IN SEPTEMBER 1980, MY PARENTS ABRUPTLY PLANNED A VACATION. I THINK THEY REALIZED THAT SOON SUCH THINGS WOULD NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE. AS IT HAPPENED, THEY WERE RIGHT AND SO WE WENT TO ITALY AND SPAIN FOR THREE WEEKS.



.. IT WAS WONDERFUL ..

RIGHT BEFORE GOING BACK, IN THE HOTEL ROOM IN MADRID



THE TV SHOWED A MAP OF IRAN AND A BLACK CLOUD COVERING THE COUNTRY LITTLE BY LITTLE.





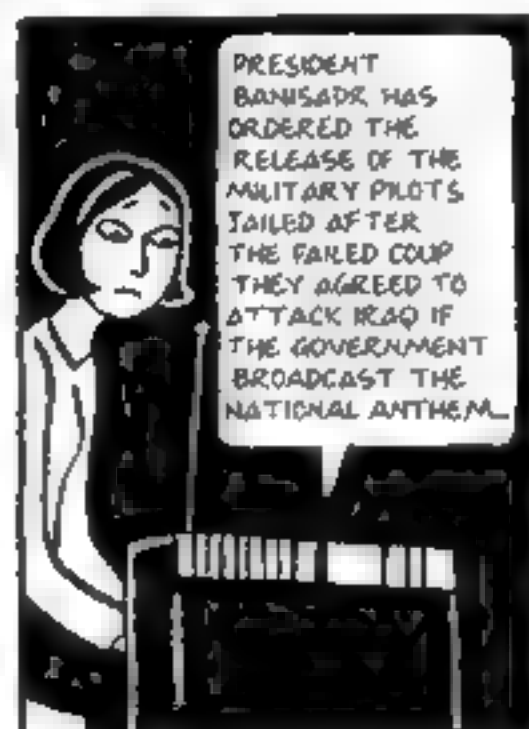
THE F-14s

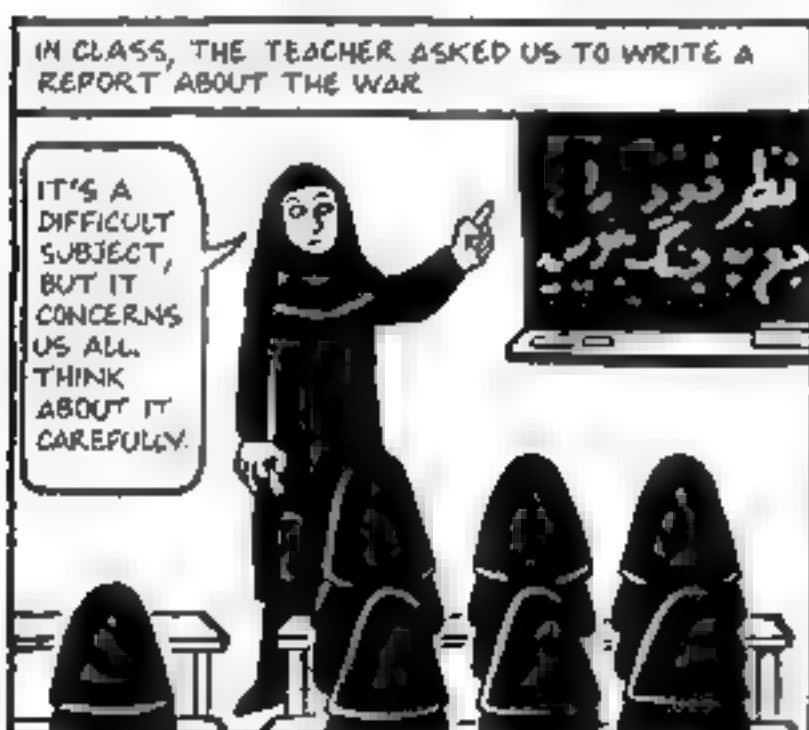
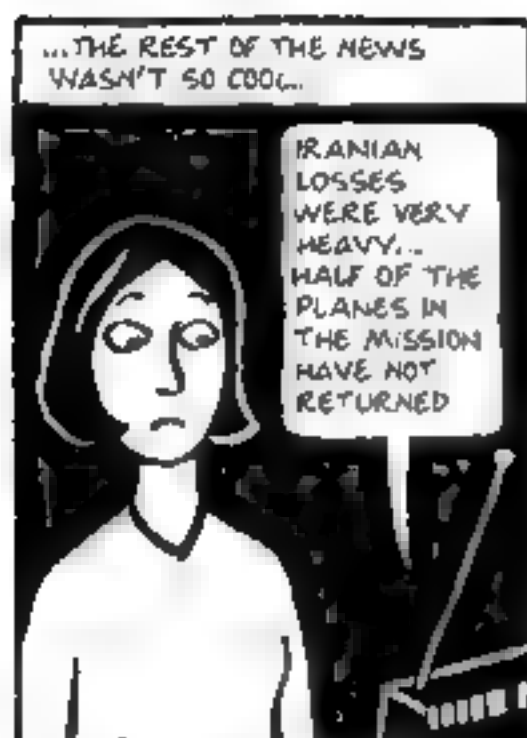


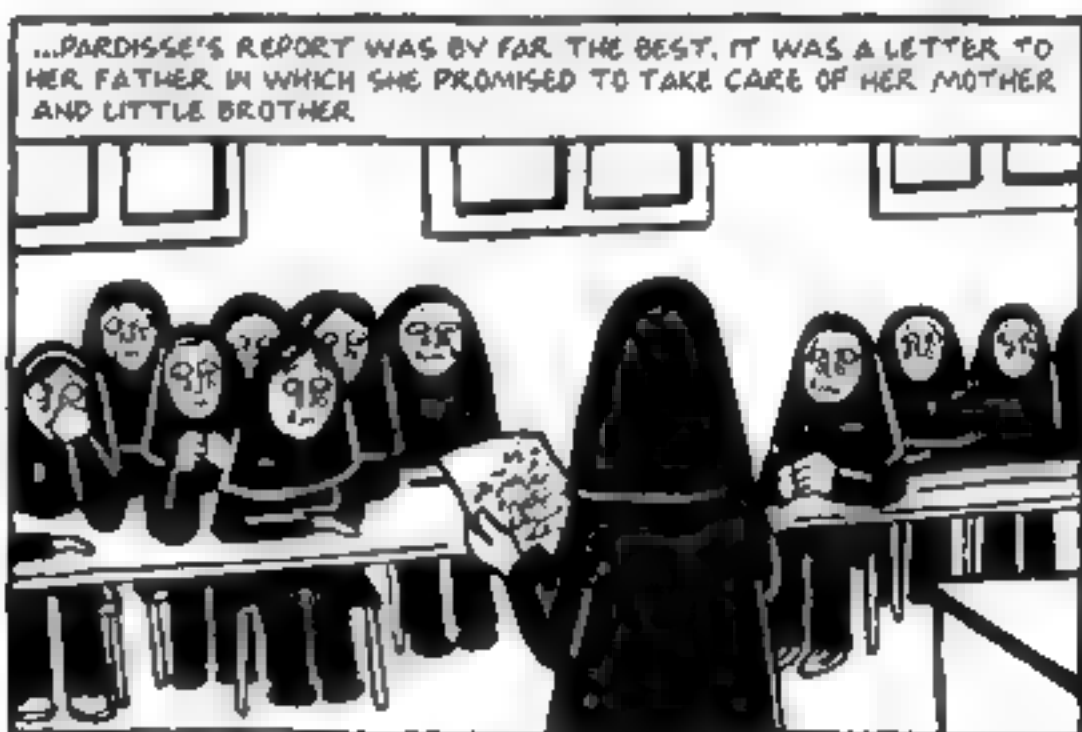
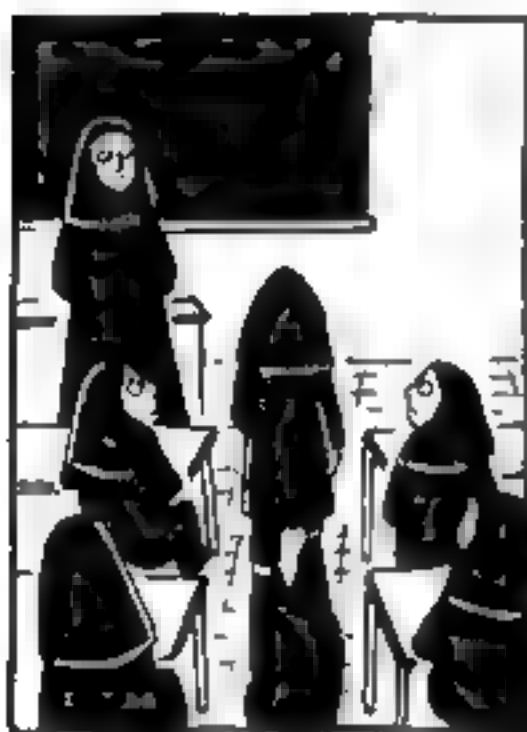






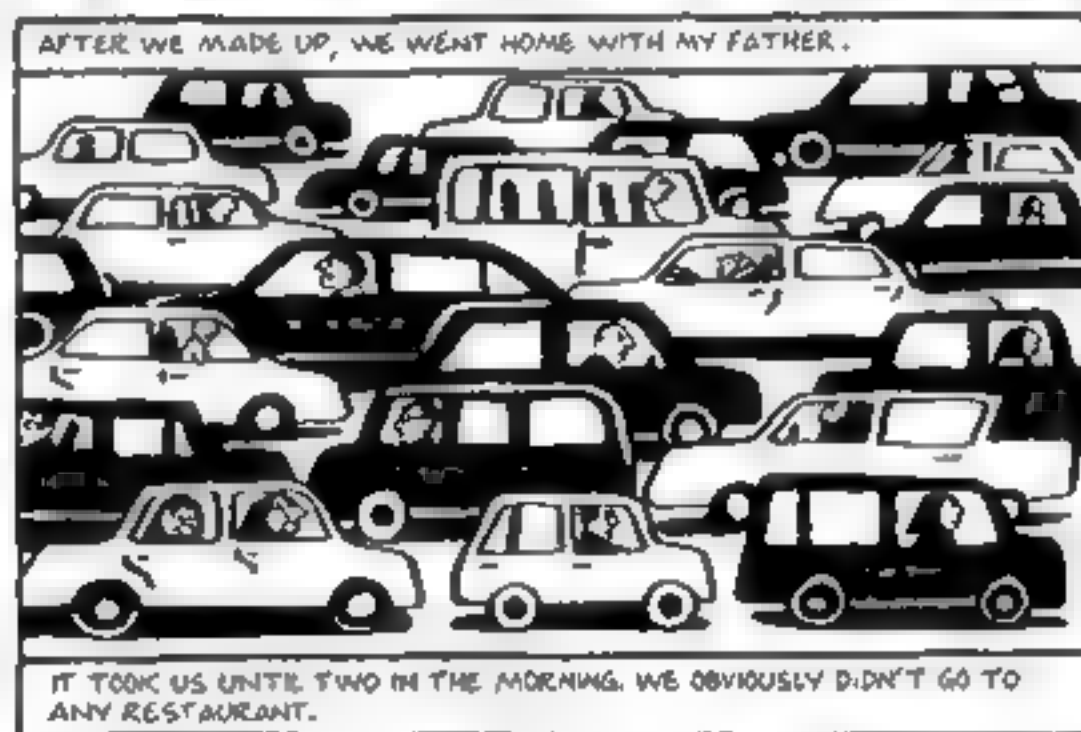
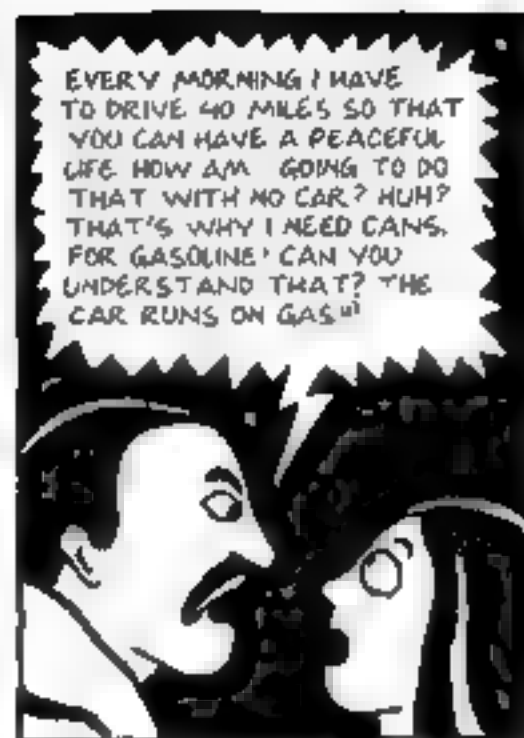






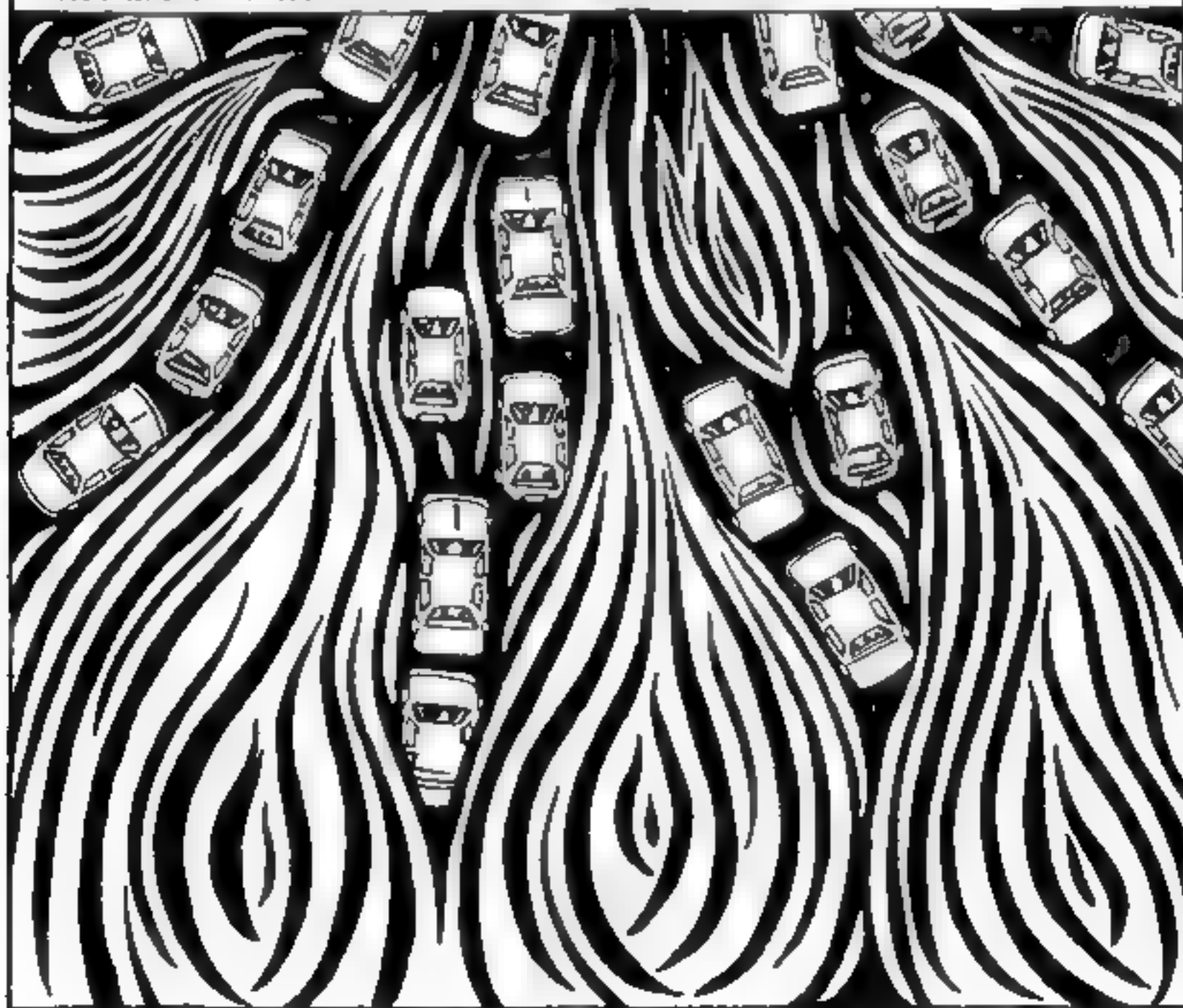
THE JEWELS







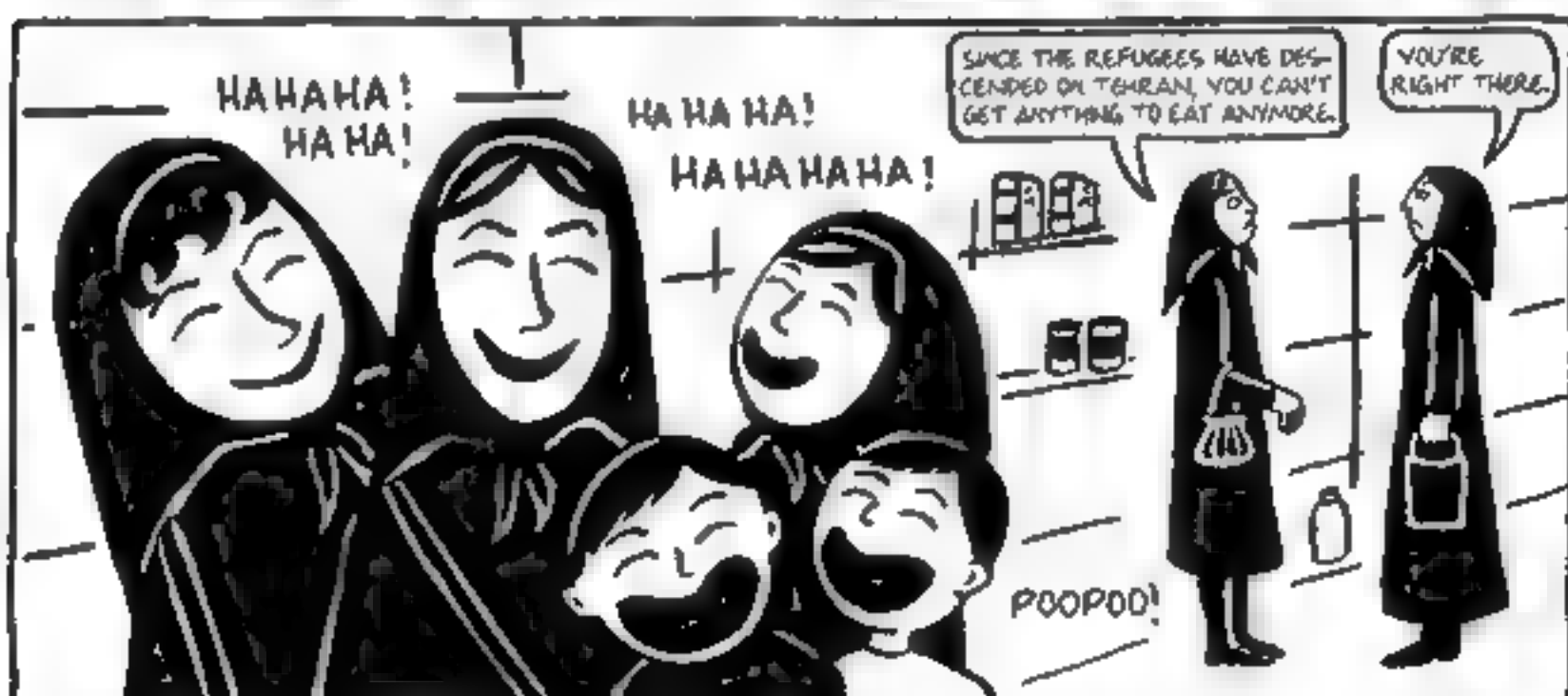
AFTER ABADAN, EVERY BORDER TOWN WAS TARGETED BY BOMBERS. MOST OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THOSE AREAS HAD TO FLEE NORTHWARD. FAR FROM THE IRAQI MISSILES







MALI AND HER FAMILY SPENT A WEEK WITH US. THAT'S HOW LONG IT TOOK TO SELL THE JEWELRY AND START OVER AGAIN. MALI'S MOTHER WAS BITTER AND HARD TO DEAL WITH (AND DEAF), BUT THEY WERE HAPPY AT OUR PLACE. THEN, ONE DAY, WE WENT TO THE SUPERMARKET.

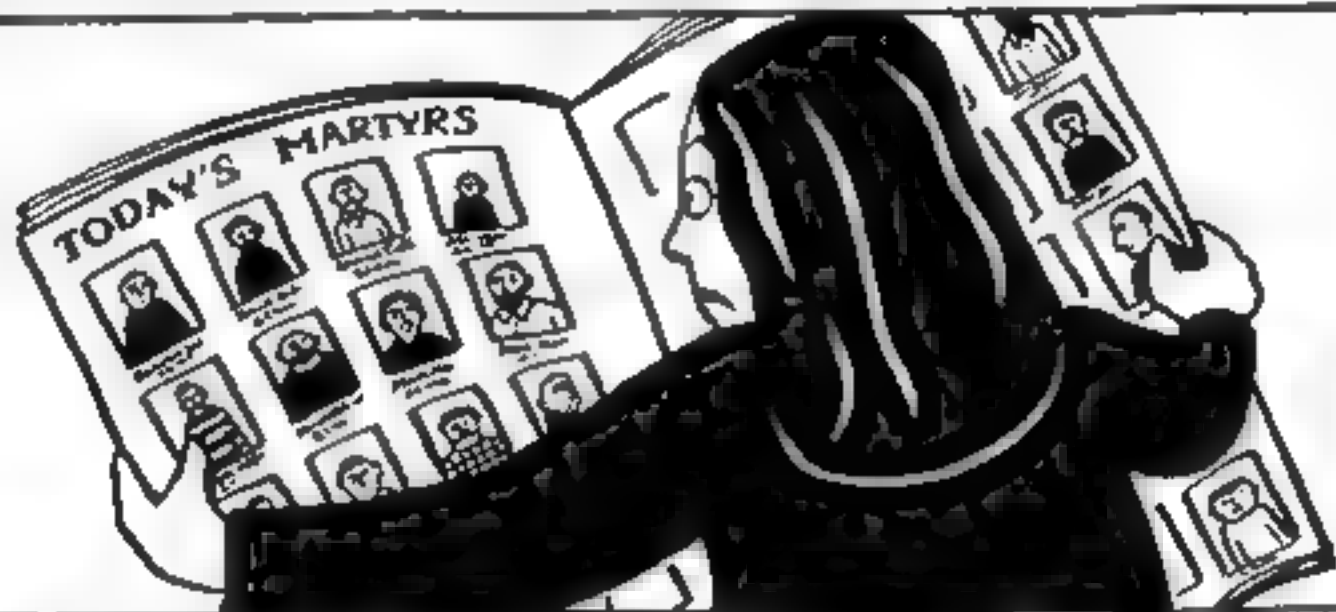






THE KEY

THE IRAQI ARMY HAD CONQUERED THE CITY OF KHORRAMSHAHR. THEIR ARMS WERE MODERN, BUT WHERE IRAQ HAD QUALITY, WE HAD QUANTITY. COMPARED TO IRAQ, IRAN HAD A HUGE RESERVOIR OF POTENTIAL SOLDIERS. THE NUMBER OF WAR MARTYRS EMPHASIZED THAT DIFFERENCE.

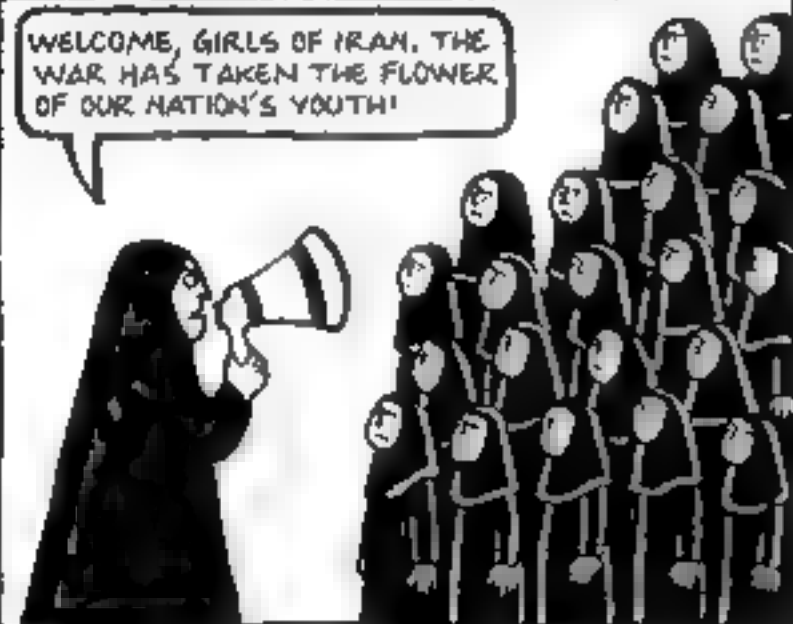


I AGREED WITH MY MOTHER. I TOO TRIED TO THINK ONLY OF LIFE. HOWEVER, IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY AT SCHOOL, THEY LINED US UP TWICE A DAY TO MOURN THE WAR DEAD. THEY PUT ON FUNERAL MARCHES, AND WE HAD TO BEAT OUR BREASTS



I REMEMBER MY INITIATION. IT WAS THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS AFTER SUMMER VACATION.

WELCOME, GIRLS OF IRAN. THE WAR HAS TAKEN THE FLOWER OF OUR NATION'S YOUTH!



THEN THE LOUDSPEAKERS STARTED TO SING

BABABABABA
HEY TROOPS OF...
BE READY, BE READY

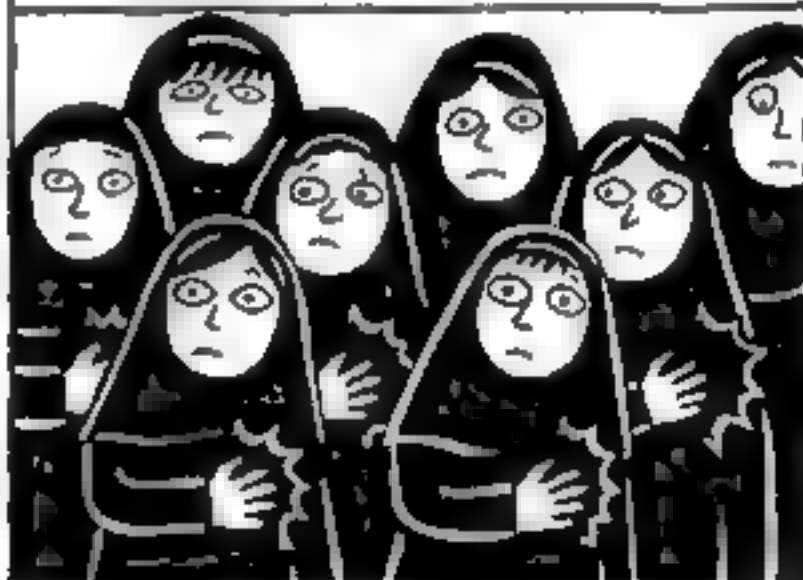


LET'S GO CHILDREN, ON THE HEART!

WHACK!
WHACK!

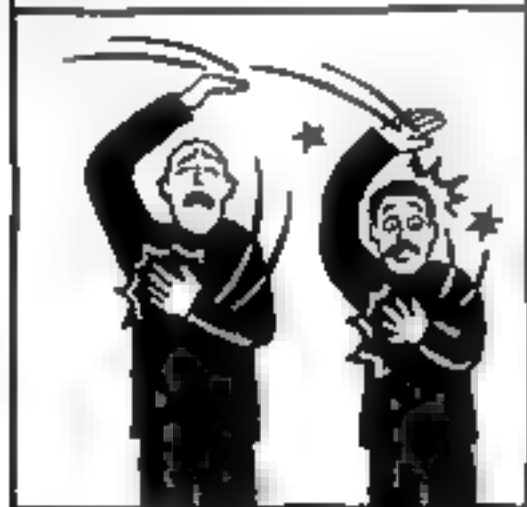


AND ALL TOGETHER, WE BEGAN THE SESSION.



IT WASN'T AS BAD AS ONE MIGHT THINK. WE'D SEEN IT BEFORE.

HITTING YOURSELF IS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S RITUALS. DURING CERTAIN RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, SOME PEOPLE FLAGELLATED THEMSELVES BRUTALLY.



SOMETIMES EVEN WITH CHAINS.

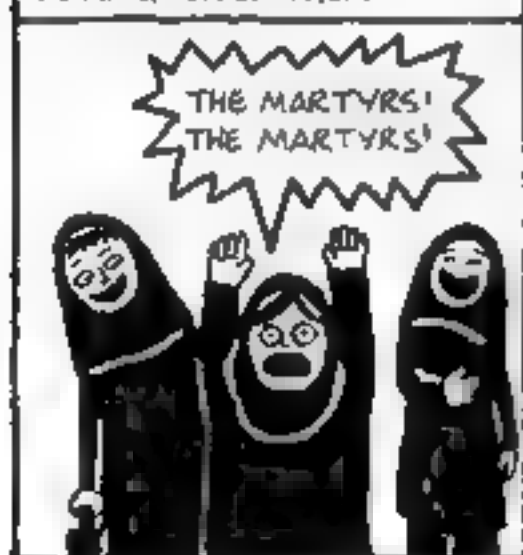


IT COULD GO VERY FAR



SOMETIMES IT WAS CONSIDERED A MACHO THING.

AFTER A LITTLE WHILE, NO ONE TOOK THE TORTURE SESSIONS SERIOUSLY ANYMORE. AS FOR ME, I IMMEDIATELY STARTED MAKING FUN OF THEM



EVERY SITUATION OFFERED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LAUGHS. LIKE WHEN WE HAD TO KNIT WINTER HOODS FOR THE SOLDIERS.



...OR WHEN WE HAD TO DECORATE THE CLASSROOM FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION.



I THINK THAT THE REASON WE WERE SO REBELLIOUS WAS THAT OUR GENERATION HAD KNOWN SECULAR SCHOOLS. OBVIOUSLY, THEY CALLED OUR PARENTS IN

YOUR CHILDREN HAVE NO RESPECT FOR ANYTHING. NO SELF-CONTROL! THE BASIS OF EDUCATION COMES FROM THE FAMILY!

STOP RIGHT THERE, YOU'RE SAYING THAT WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN?

LISTEN, WE'RE AT WAR. A LOT OF CHILDREN DON'T EVEN HAVE SCHOOL THESE DAYS. YOURS HAVE A RARE OPPORTUNITY. SO YOU SHOULD MAKE SURE THEY'RE WELL-BEHAVED!

WELL-BEHAVED? SO THEY CAN HIT THEMSELVES TWICE A DAY??

SO THEY CAN BE COVERED FROM HEAD TO TOE?

SO THAT THEY CAN BE FORBIDDEN TO PLAY LIKE THE KIDS THEY ARE??

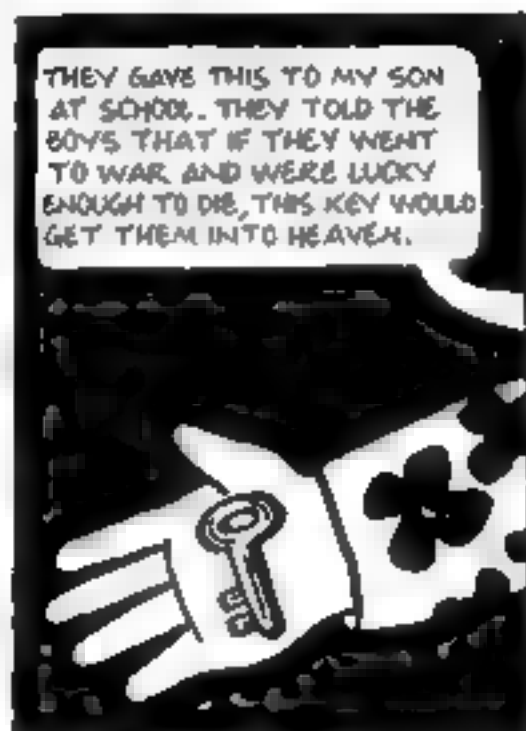
OH!

ANYWAY, THAT'S HOW IT IS! EITHER THEY OBEY THE LAW, OR THEY'RE EXPELLED!

AND MAKE SURE THEY WEAR THEIR VES CORRECTLY...

IF HAIR IS AS STIMULATING AS YOU SAY, THEN YOU NEED TO SHAVE YOUR MUSTACHE!

MY FATHER ACTUALLY SAID THAT.







THE KEY TO PARADISE WAS FOR POOR PEOPLE. THOUSANDS OF YOUNG KIDS, PROMISED A BETTER LIFE, EXPLODED ON THE MINEFIELDS WITH THEIR KEYS AROUND THEIR NECKS.



MRS. NASRINE'S SON MANAGED TO AVOID THAT FATE, BUT LOTS OF OTHER KIDS FROM HIS NEIGHBORHOOD DIDN'T

MEANWHILE, I GOT TO GO TO MY FIRST PARTY. NOT ONLY DID MY MOM LET ME GO, SHE ALSO KNITTED ME A SWEATER FULL OF HOLES AND MADE ME A NECKLACE WITH CHAINS AND NAILS. PUNK ROCK WAS IN.



I WAS LOOKING SHARP.



THE WINE

AFTER THE BORDER TOWNS, TEHRAN BECAME THE BOMBERS' MAIN TARGET TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER PEOPLE IN OUR BUILDING, WE TURNED THE BASEMENT INTO A SHELTER EVERY TIME THE SIREN RANG OUT, EVERYONE WOULD RUN DOWNSTAIRS.

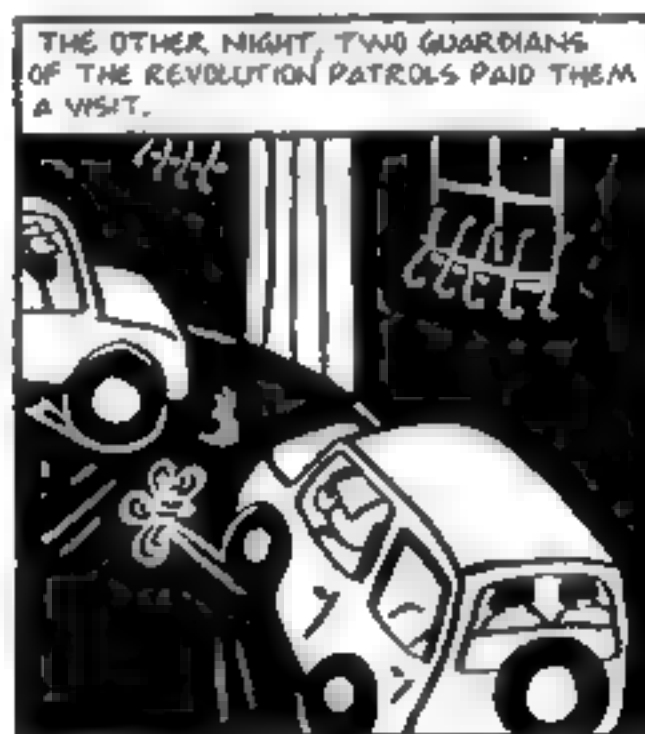


PUT YOUR CIGARETTE OUT THEY SAY THAT THE GLOW OF A CIGARETTE IS THE EASIEST THING TO SEE FROM THE SKY

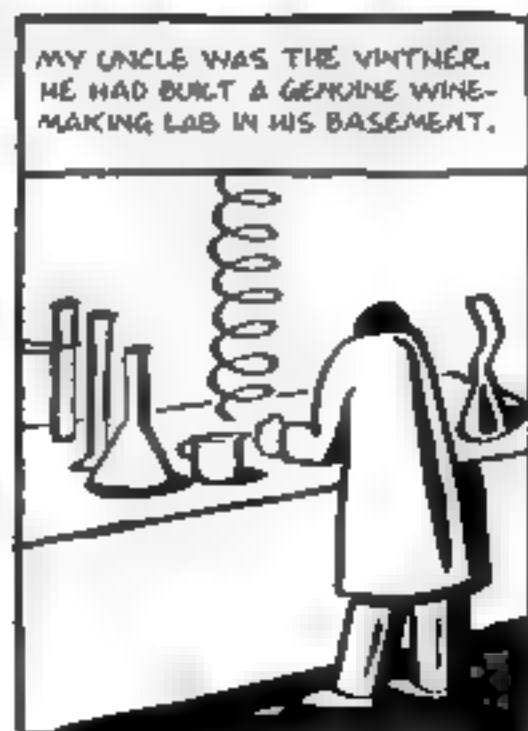
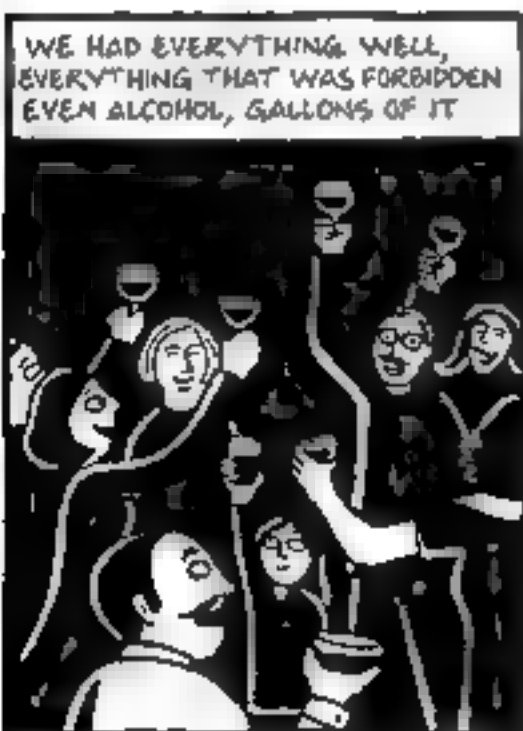
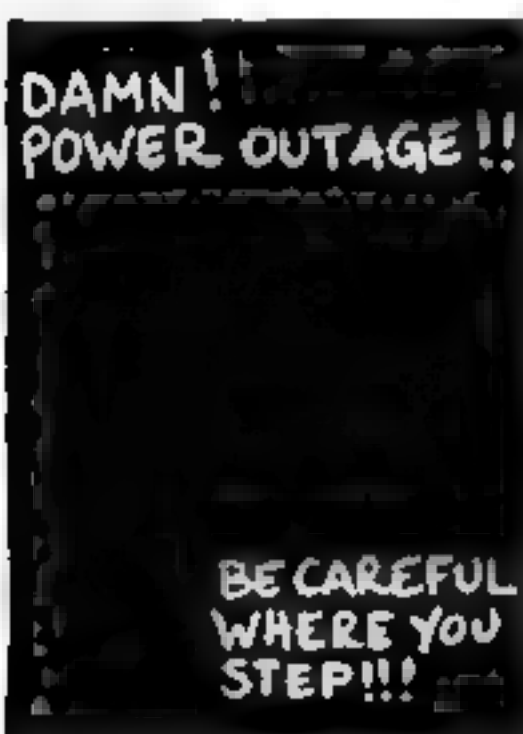
BUT WE'RE IN THE BASEMENT HERE!







IN SPITE OF ALL THE DANGERS, THE PARTIES WENT ON. "WITHOUT THEM IT WOULDN'T BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY BEARABLE," SOME SAID. "WITHOUT PARTIES, WE MIGHT AS WELL JUST BURY OURSELVES NOW," ADDED THE OTHERS. MY UNCLE INVITED US TO HIS HOUSE TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF MY COUSIN. EVERYONE WAS THERE. EVEN GRANDMA WAS DANCING.



SUDDENLY, SIRENS STARTED TO WAIL...



... AND MY AUNT DID TOO.



I FOUND MYSELF WITH THE NEWBORN BABY WE HAD BEEN CELEBRATING IN MY ARMS



HER MOTHER HAD ALREADY ABANDONED HER



SINCE THAT DAY, I'VE HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "MATERNAL INSTINCT"







THE CIGARETTE



JORDAN AVENUE WAS WHERE THE TEENAGERS FROM NORTH TEHRAN (THE NICE NEIGHBORHOODS) HUNG OUT. KANSAS WAS ITS TEMPLE



IF SOME PUBLIC PLACES HAD SURVIVED THE REGIME'S REPRESSION, EITHER IT WAS TO LEAVE US A LITTLE FREE SPACE, OR ELSE IT WAS OUT OF IGNORANCE PERSONALLY, THE LATTER THEORY SOUNDED MORE LIKELY. THEY PROBABLY HADN'T THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHAT "KANSAS" WAS



MY FRIENDS WEREN'T ACTUALLY THAT INTERESTED IN THE HAMBURGERS..



WE LET THE BOYS KNOW THAT THEY COULD FOLLOW US BY A FEW SIGNS.

FOLLOW THE OTHERS, I MEAN. I WAS TOO YOUNG TO INTEREST THEM

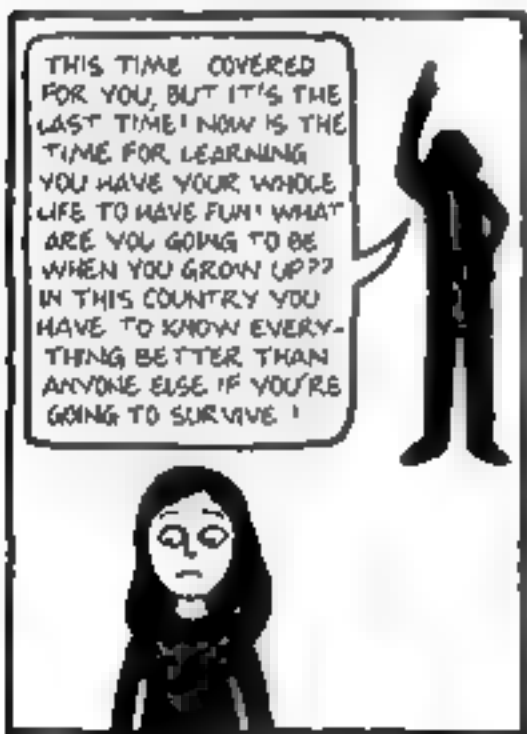


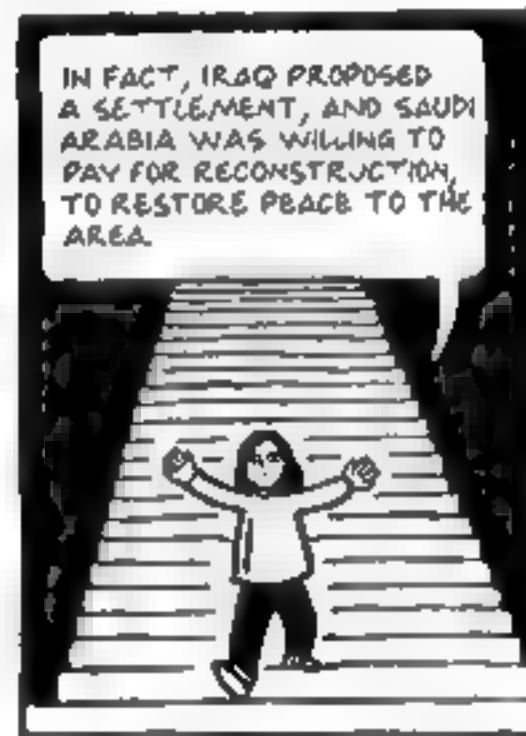
..THE SIRENS WENT OFF.



WE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT IF WE WERE IN THE STREET DURING A BOMBING, WE SHOULD LIE DOWN IN THE GUTTER FOR SAFETY.









*A SHITE HOLY CITY IN IRAQ



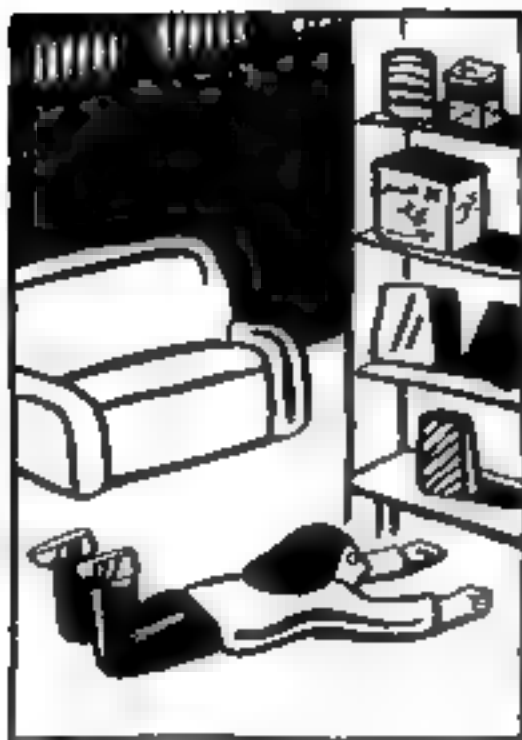
THE WALLS WERE SUDDENLY COVERED WITH BELLIGERENT SLOGANS.





THEY EVENTUALLY ADMITTED THAT THE SURVIVAL OF THE REGIME DEPENDED ON THE WAR.

WHEN I THINK WE COULD HAVE AVOIDED IT ALL, IT JUST MAKES ME SICK. A MILLION PEOPLE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE.



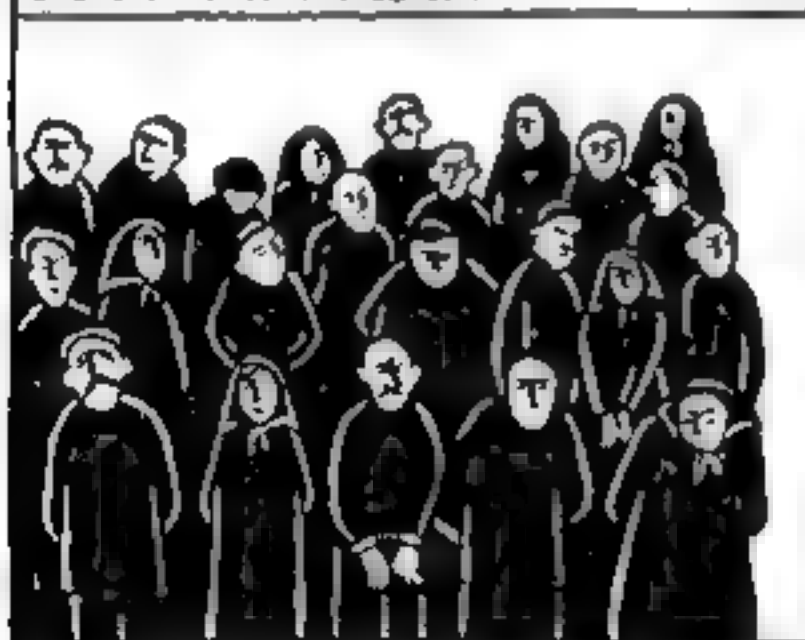
NATURALLY, THE REGIME
BECAME MORE REPRESSIVE.



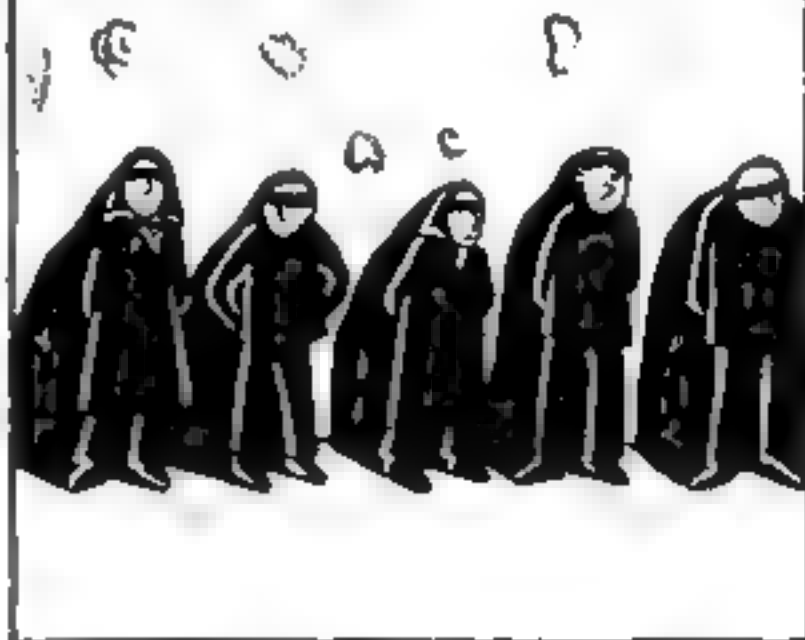
IN THE NAME OF THAT WAR, THEY
EXTERMINATED THE ENEMY WITHIN.



THOSE WHO OPPOSED THE REGIME WERE
SYSTEMATICALLY ARRESTED.



AND EXECUTED TOGETHER



AS FOR ME, I SEALED
MY ACT OF REBELLION
AGAINST MY MOTHER'S
DICTATORSHIP BY
SMOKING THE
CIGARETTE I'D STOLEN
FROM MY UNCLE TWO
WEEKS EARLIER.



KOFFF! KOFFF!
KOFFF!!!



IT WAS AWFUL BUT
THIS WAS NOT THE
MOMENT TO GIVE IN



WITH THIS FIRST
CIGARETTE, I KISSED
CHILDHOOD GOODBYE.



NOW I WAS A GROWN-UP.



THE PASSPORT

JULY 1982. WE WERE AT MY AUNT'S PLACE. THE INTERNAL WAR HAD BECOME A BIGGER ISSUE THAN THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ. ANYONE SHOWING THE SLIGHTEST RESISTANCE TO THE REGIME WAS PERSECUTED.

THERE MUST BE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE OPPOSITION IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. WE HEAR GUNSHOTS EVERY DAY.

TAHER, STOP SMOKING!



THE STRESS I GET FROM EVERY GUNSHOT I HEAR IS MUCH WORSE FOR ME THAN THE CIGARETTES.



SINCE HE HAD SENT HIS OLDEST SON TO HOLLAND, UNCLE TAHER HAD HAD TWO HEART ATTACKS. HE WAS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN TO SMOKE.

THE BUTCHER TOLD ME HE'S SEEN KIDS EXECUTED IN THE STREET WITHOUT EVEN HAVING BEEN JUDGED. THE SHAME OF IT



WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, I'M GLAD THAT MY SON IS SAFELY ABROAD. BUT WITH THE BORDERS CLOSED, HOW AM I EVER GOING TO SEE HIM AGAIN?



THE BORDERS WERE CLOSED FOR THREE YEARS BETWEEN 1980 AND 1983.

HOW MANY TIMES DID I SAY TO MY WIFE, "COME ON, LET'S JOIN HIM." SHE DIDN'T WANT TO. SHE INVOKED HER COUNTRY, HER FAMILY, ETC, ETC.



ANYWAY, I'M ALREADY 59. BUT THOSE POOR 20-YEAR-OLDS WHO GET SLAUGHTERED. THEY KILL ME... THEY KILL ME



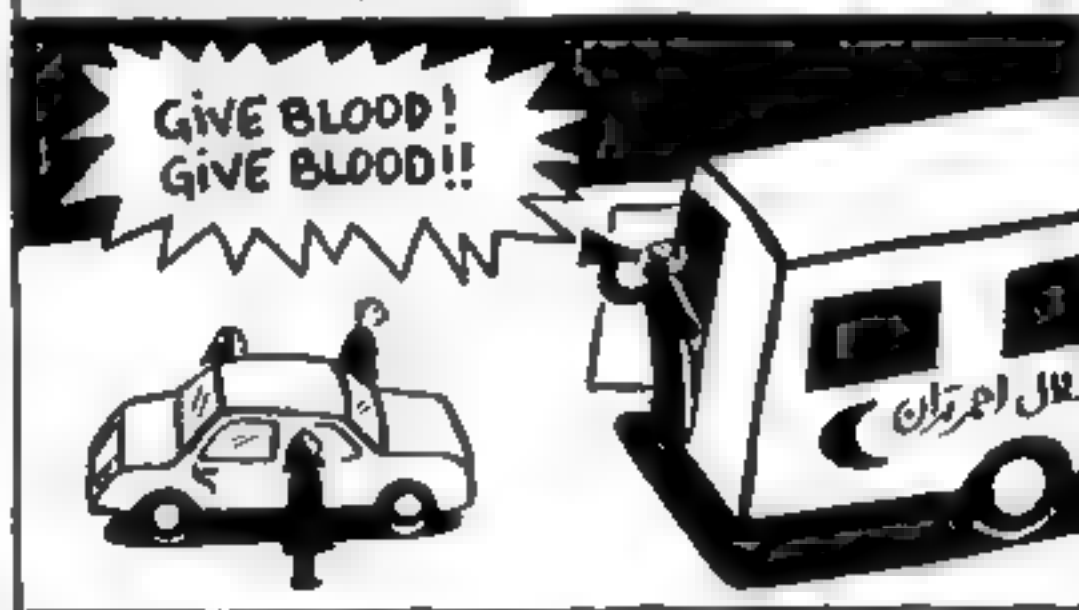
MY UNCLE TAHER WAS SO SAD THAT IT HURT TO LOOK AT HIM. NO ONE DARED SAY A WORD



UNCLE TAHER HAD JUST
SUFFERED HIS THIRD HEART
ATTACK. WE WERE OFF TO
THE HOSPITAL.



RED CRESCENT TRUCKS WERE PULLED UP IN FRONT OF THE HOSPITAL,
CALLING FOR PEOPLE TO GIVE BLOOD FOR THE WAR WOUNDED. THERE
WERE SO MANY OF THEM.





AFTER THE DIRECTOR, WE WENT TO SEE THE CHIEF OF STAFF, DR. FATHI

MA'AM, WE WILL DO WHAT WE CAN, WE ARE TERRIBLY STRAPPED AT THE MOMENT.

LOOK IN THIS ROOM THEY'RE ALL VICTIMS OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS!

THE GERMANS SELL CHEMICAL WEAPONS TO IRAN AND IRAQ THE WOUNDED ARE THEN SENT TO GERMANY TO BE TREATED. VERITABLE HUMAN GUINEA PIGS

WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS? I COULDN'T CARE LESS. I WANT MY HUSBAND TO GET WELL!

CALM DOWN

CALM DOWN, DEAR. EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT DON'T WORRY

WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

EBI, THE BROTHER OF
ANOOSH? COME IN! COME IN!



A cartoon illustration of a man in a suit and tie sitting at a desk, looking surprised. A woman with curly hair stands behind him, also looking surprised. A speech bubble from the man says "NOT ME, MY BROTHER-IN-LAW."

HOW MUCH TIME
WILL IT TAKE TO
MAKE A PASSPORT?



CR 100

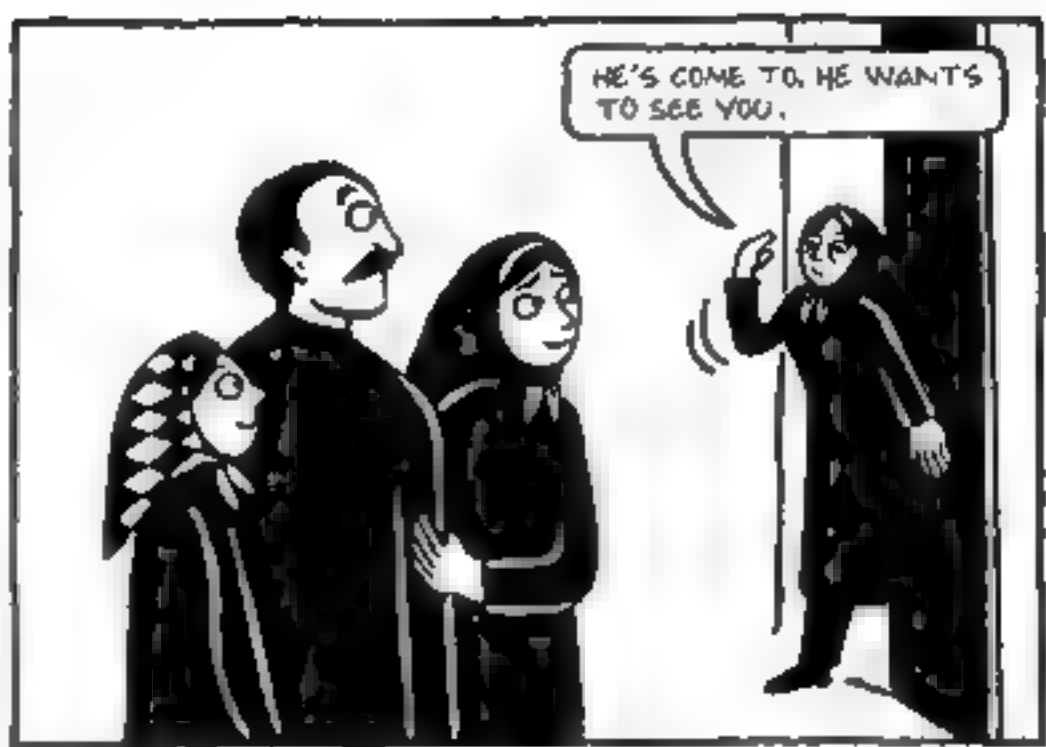


AFTER NEGOTIATING A PRICE, THE EQUIVALENT OF ABOUT \$200, KHOSRO AGREED TO MAKE A PASSPORT IN FIVE DAYS. WE WENT BACK TO THE HOSPITAL FEELING A LITTLE BETTER.



I SAW KHOSRO. HE CAN MAKE A PASSPORT FOR TAHER BY WEDNESDAY

SO?



HE'S COME TO. HE WANTS TO SEE YOU.



SEE, IT'S NOT THE CIGARETTES THAT DID IT! IT WAS THAT DAMN GRENADE...

DON'T UPSET YOURSELF, TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE



LOOK AT HOW LITTLE MARTI IS GROWING UP ONE DAY SHE'LL LEAVE AND YOU'LL SEE HOW HARD IT IS TO LOSE YOUR KIDS.



I HAVE ONLY ONE WISH, AND THAT'S TO SEE MY SON AGAIN, ONE LAST TIME.

TWO DAYS LATER, NILOUFAR, THE EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD COMMUNIST WAS SPOTTED



ARRESTED...



AND EXECUTED.



KHOSRO FOUND HIS HOUSE RANSACKED...



FLED ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS TO TURKEY...

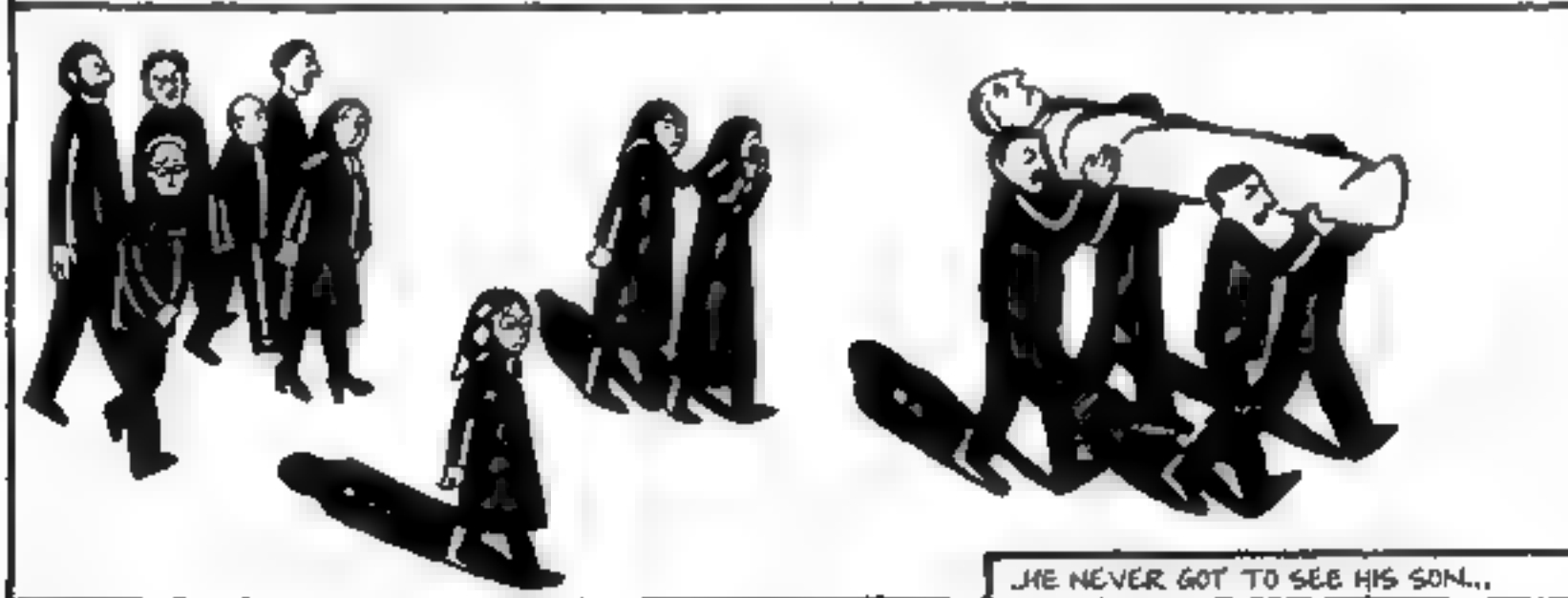


AND SOUGHT ASYLUM WITH HIS BROTHER IN SWEDEN.



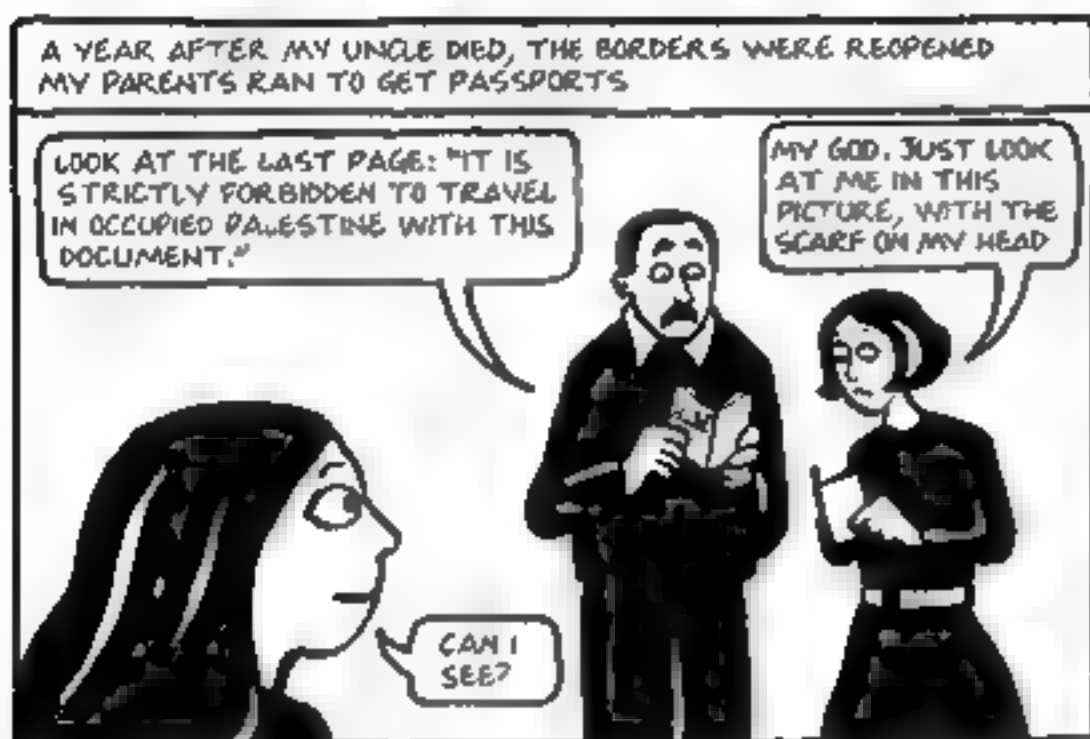
HE NEVER GOT TO MAKE THE PASSPORT

THREE WEEKS AFTER THESE EVENTS, UNCLE TAHER WAS BURIED. HIS REAL PASSPORT ARRIVED THE SAME DAY...



HE NEVER GOT TO SEE HIS SON...

KIM WILDE



FIRST THING AFTER THEY GOT TO ISTANBUL, THEY WENT TO BUY THE POSTERS















AT THE COMMITTEE, THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO INFORM MY PARENTS. THEY COULD DETAIN ME FOR HOURS, OR FOR DAYS. I COULD BE WHIPPED. IN SHORT, ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN TO ME. IT WAS TIME FOR ACTION.



THE SHABBAT



MOM'S PESSIMISM SOON WON OUT OVER DAD'S OPTIMISM. IT TURNED OUT THAT THE IRAQIS DID HAVE MISSILES. THEY WERE CALLED "SCUDS" AND TEHRAN BECAME THEIR TARGET



WHEN THE SIRENS WENT ON, IT MEANT WE HAD THREE MINUTES TO KNOW IF THE END HAD COME

WE'RE NOT GOING TO THE BASEMENT?

IT WOULDN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE!



CONSIDERING THE DAMAGE THEY DO, WHETHER WE'RE IN THE BASEMENT OR ON THE ROOF, IT'S THE SAME THING.



THE THREE MINUTES SEEMED LIKE THREE DAYS. FOR THE FIRST TIME, I REALIZED JUST HOW MUCH DANGER WE WERE IN



I DON'T WANT TO DIE

YOU WON'T DEAR I PROMISE YOU!



NOW THAT TEHRAN WAS UNDER ATTACK, MANY FLED. THE CITY WAS DESERTED. AS FOR US, WE STAYED. NOT JUST OUT OF FATALISM. IF THERE WAS TO BE A FUTURE, IN MY PARENTS' EYES, THAT FUTURE WAS LINKED TO MY FRENCH EDUCATION. AND TEHRAN WAS THE ONLY PLACE I COULD GET IT.



SOME PEOPLE, MORE CIRCUMSPECT, TOOK SHELTER IN THE BASEMENTS OF BIG HOTELS, WELL-KNOWN FOR THEIR SAFETY. APPARENTLY, THEIR REINFORCED CONCRETE STRUCTURES WERE BOMBPROOF.



ONE EXAMPLE WAS OUR NEIGHBORS, THE BABA-LEVYS. THEY WERE AMONG THE FEW JEWISH FAMILIES THAT HAD STAYED AFTER THE REVOLUTION. MR. BABA-LEVY SAID THEIR ANCESTORS HAD COME THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO, AND IRAN WAS THEIR HOME.



...THEIR DAUGHTER NEDA WAS A QUIET GIRL WHO DIDN'T PLAY MUCH, BUT WE WOULD TALK ABOUT ROMANCE FROM TIME TO TIME.

ONE DAY A BLOND PRINCE WITH BLUE EYES WILL COME AND TAKE ME TO HIS CASTLE...

OH YEAH! ME TOO!



SO LIFE WENT ON.





I DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK UP I LOOKED AT MY TREMBLING LEGS. I COULDN'T GO FORWARD, LIKE IN A NIGHTMARE

LET THEM BE ALIVE. LET THEM BE ALIVE. LET THEM...



MARJI



MARJI!

MOM!



YOU'RE ALL RIGHT? DAD'S ALL RIGHT? GRANDMA'S ALL RIGHT?

EVERYONE'S OK. I WAS THE ONLY ONE HOME.

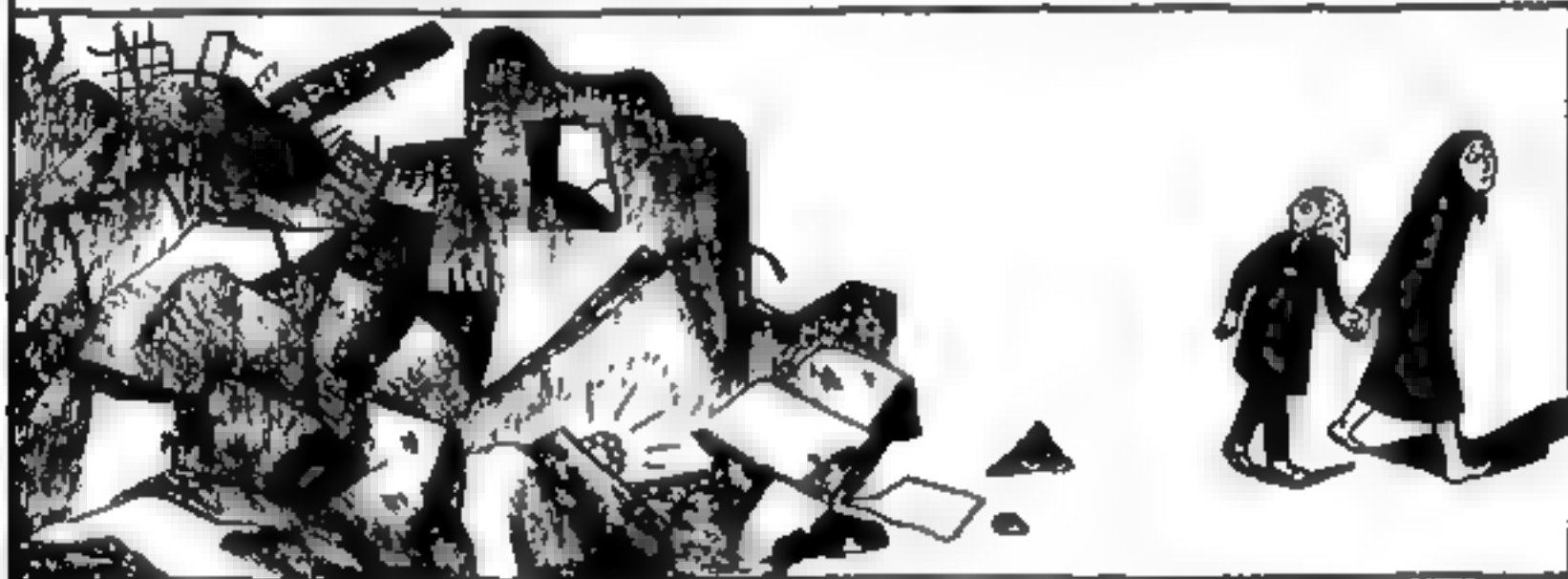


OH, MOM.





WHEN WE WALKED PAST THE BABA-LEVY'S HOUSE, WHICH WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED, I COULD FEEL THAT SHE WAS DISCREETLY PULLING ME AWAY. SOMETHING TOLD ME THAT THE BABA-LEVYS HAD BEEN AT HOME. SOMETHING CAUGHT MY ATTENTION.



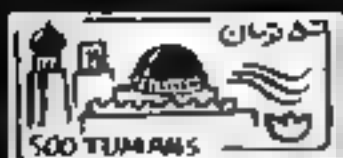
I SAW A TURQUOISE BRACELET IT WAS NEDA'S. HER AUNT HAD GIVEN IT TO HER FOR HER FOURTEENTH BIRTHDAY...



THE BRACELET WAS STILL ATTACHED TO...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT



NO SCREAM IN THE WORLD COULD HAVE RELIEVED MY SUFFERING AND MY ANGER



THE DOWRY

AFTER THE DEATH OF NEDA BABA-LEVY, MY LIFE TOOK A NEW TURN. IN 1984, I WAS FOURTEEN AND A REBEL. NOTHING SCARED ME ANYMORE.



AFTER I WAS EXPELLED, IT WAS A REAL STRUGGLE TO FIND ANOTHER SCHOOL THAT WOULD ACCEPT ME. HITTING THE PRINCIPAL WAS A VERITABLE CRIME. BUT THANKS TO MY AUNT, WHO KNEW SOME BUREAUCRATS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, THEY MANAGED TO PLACE ME IN ANOTHER SCHOOL. AND THERE...

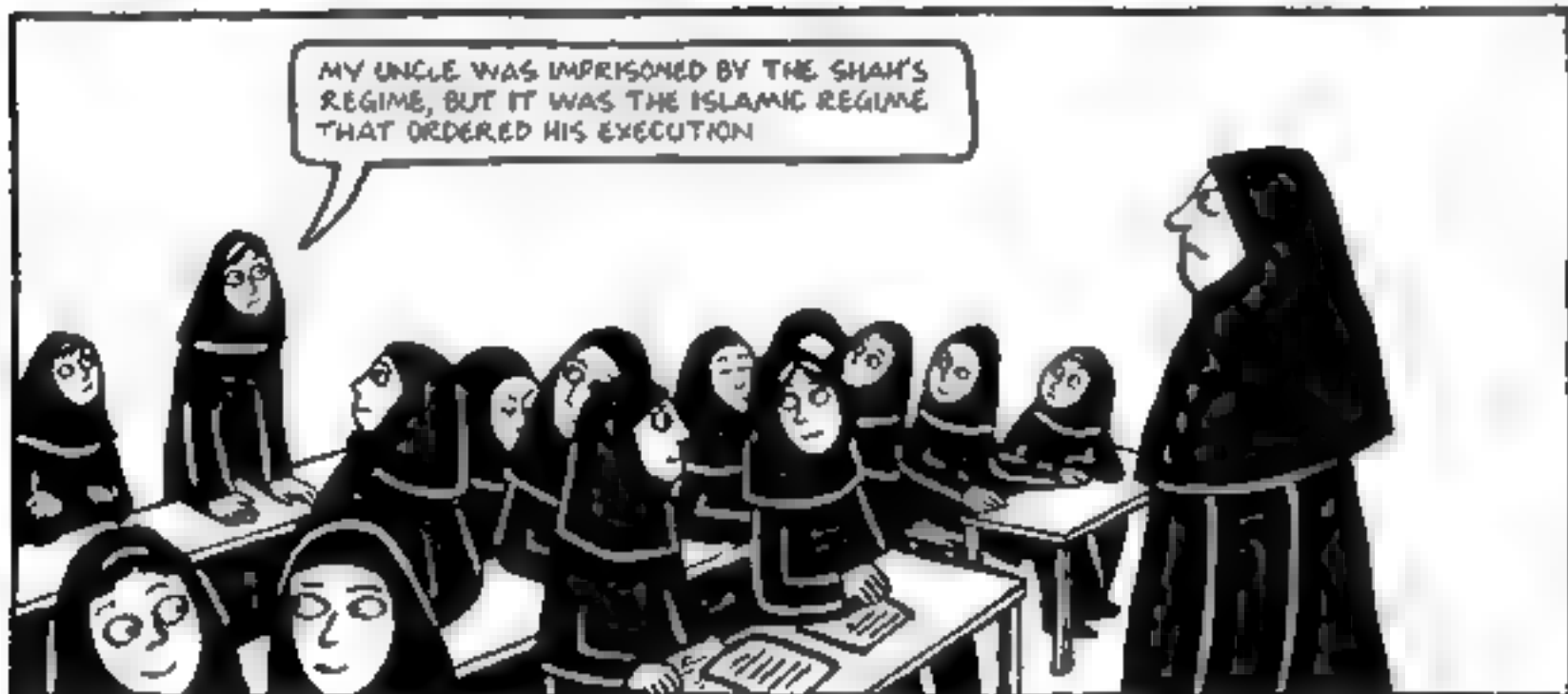
SINCE THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC WAS FOUNDED, WE NO LONGER HAVE POLITICAL PRISONERS.



MA'AM!



MY UNCLE WAS IMPRISONED BY THE SHAH'S REGIME, BUT IT WAS THE ISLAMIC REGIME THAT ORDERED HIS EXECUTION



YOU SAY THAT WE DON'T HAVE POLITICAL PRISONERS ANYMORE BUT WE'VE GONE FROM 3000 PRISONERS UNDER THE SHAH TO 300,000 UNDER YOUR REGIME



HOW DARE YOU USE TO US LIKE THAT?

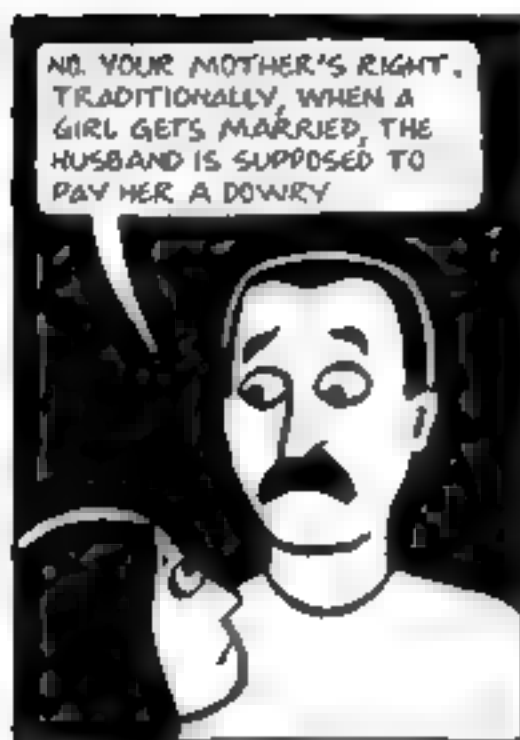


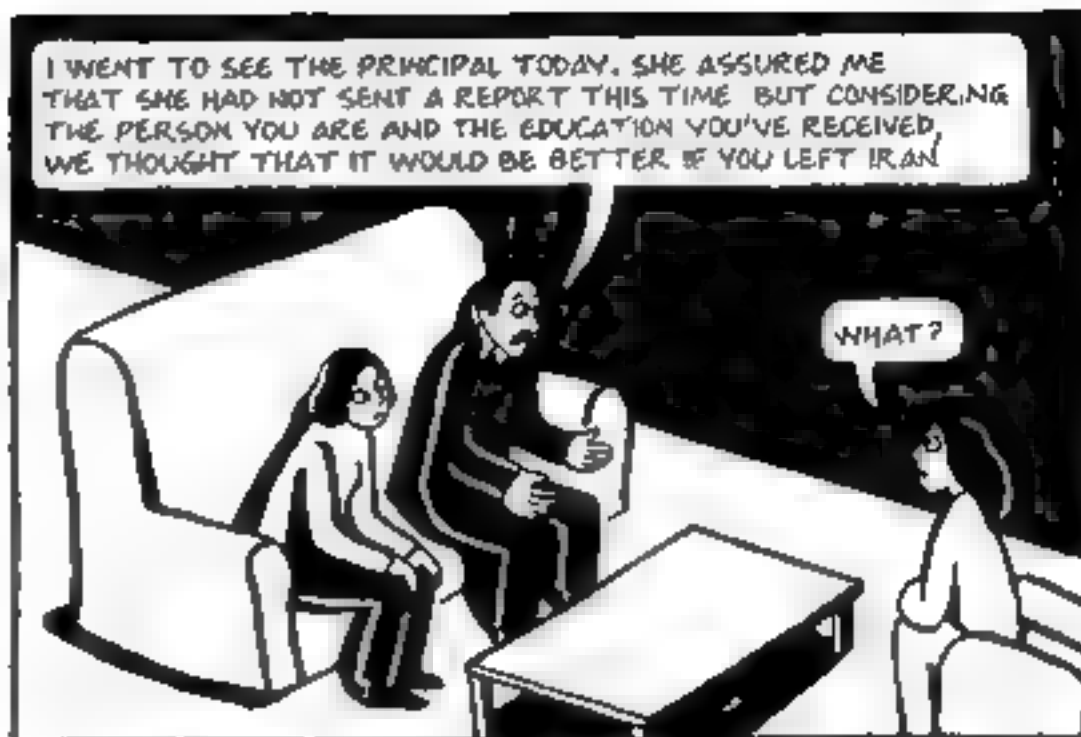
OH, SATRAPI!

CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!











I REPEATED WHAT THEY HAD TOLD ME OVER AND OVER IN MY HEAD. I WAS PRETTY SURE THEY WEREN'T COMING TO VIENNA.



I STAYED UP ALL NIGHT AND WONDERED IF THE MOON SHONE AS BRIGHTLY IN VIENNA



THE NEXT DAY I FILLED A JAR WITH SOIL FROM OUR GARDEN, IRANIAN SOIL.



I TOOK DOWN ALL OF MY POSTERS



I INVITED MY GIRLFRIENDS OVER TO SAY GOODBYE.



HERE I'M GIVING YOU MY MOST PRECIOUS THINGS, SO THAT YOU WON'T FORGET ME.



I NEVER REALIZED HOW MUCH THEY LOVED ME



AND I UNDERSTOOD HOW IMPORTANT THEY WERE TO ME.

ON THE EVE OF MY DEPARTURE, MY GRANDMOTHER CAME TO SPEND THE NIGHT AT OUR HOUSE.

CAN I SLEEP WITH YOU?

THAT'S WHY I'M HERE!



I WATCHED MY GRANDMA UNDRESS. EACH MORNING, SHE PICKED JASMINE FLOWERS TO PUT IN HER BRA SO THAT SHE WOULD SMELL NICE. WHEN SHE UNDRESSED, YOU COULD SEE THE FLOWERS FALL FROM HER BREASTS.



IT WAS SOMETHING TO SEE

GRANDMA, HOW DO YOU HAVE SUCH ROUND BREASTS AT YOUR AGE?

EVERY MORNING AND NIGHT, SOAK THEM IN A BOWL OF ICE WATER FOR TEN MINUTES



SHE ACTUALLY DID, AND I KNEW IT. I JUST WANTED TO HEAR HER SAY IT

I'LL MISS YOU.

OH, I'LL COME SEE YOU.



SHE TOO WAS LYING TO ME.

LISTEN, I DON'T WANT TO PREACH, BUT LET ME GIVE YOU SOME ADVICE THAT WILL ALWAYS HELP YOU



IN LIFE YOU'LL MEET A LOT OF JERKS. IF THEY HURT YOU, TELL YOURSELF THAT IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE STUPID. THAT WILL HELP KEEP YOU FROM REACTING TO THEIR CRUELTY BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING WORSE THAN BITTERNESS AND VENGEANCE... ALWAYS KEEP YOUR DIGNITY AND BE TRUE TO YOURSELF.



I SMELLED MY GRANDMA'S BOSOM. IT SMELLED GOOD I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT SMELL









Marjane Satrapi was born in 1969 in Rasht, Iran. She grew up in Tehran, where she studied at the Lycée Français before leaving for Vienna and then going to Strasbourg to study illustration. She currently lives in Paris, where she is at work on the sequel to *Persepolis* and where her illustrations appear regularly in newspapers and magazines. She is also the author of several children's books.

'A triumph... Like *Maus*, *Persepolis* is one of those comic books capable of seducing even those most allergic to the genre. The author's masterstroke is to allow us to experience history from within her family, with irony and tenderness.'—*Libération*

Jacket and binding design by Jean-Christophe Menu

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JONATHAN CAPE

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'A superb piece of work. Satrapi shows us how growing up takes place in a society ruled by rigid religious dogma, and how under the conformist surface all kinds of rebellions can take place—some comic, some ending in tragedy. You can see the presence of other predecessors: the Hernandez brothers, Frans Masereel, Art Spiegelman.'—Philip Pullman

'You've never seen anything like *Persepolis*—the intimacy of a memoir, the irresistibility of a comic book, and the political depth of the conflict between fundamentalism and democracy. Marjane Satrapi may have given us a new genre.'—Gloria Steinem

'I grew up reading the Mexican comics of Gabriel Vargas, graduated to the political teachings of Rius, fell under the spell of Linda Barry and Art Spiegelman, and now I am a fan of Marjane Satrapi. Part history book, part Scheherazade, astonishing as only true stories can be, *Persepolis* gave me hope for humanity in these unkind times.'—Sandra Cisneros, author of *The House on Mango Street* and *Caramelo*

'I cannot praise enough Satrapi's moving account of growing up as a spirited young girl in revolutionary and wartime Iran. *Persepolis* is disarming and often humorous, but ultimately it is shattering.'—Joe Sacco, author of *Palestine* and *Safe Area Goražde*

'Blending the historical with the personal is not an easy task; to blend the individual with the universal is even more challenging. But Satrapi has succeeded brilliantly. This graphic novel is a reminder of the human spirit that fights oppression and death.'
—Hanan al-Shaykh, author of *Women of Sand and Myrrh* and *Only in London*

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